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**MAKERS OF  
MODERN INDIA**

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- 1. BAL GANGADHAR TILAK**
- 2. GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE**
- 3. MAHADEO GOVIND RANADE**
- 4. JAMNALAL BAJAJ**

# **MAKERS OF MODERN INDIA**

**(Being profiles of 25 celebrities)**

**T. V. PARVATE**



**UNIVERSITY PUBLISHERS**  
**JULLUNDUR — DELHI — AMBALA CANTT.**

## **MAKERS OF MODERN INDIA**

### **UNIVERSITY PUBLISHERS**

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## PREFACE

In planning the *Makers of Modern India*, the object is to acquaint the growing generation of Indians with some leading stalwarts who distinguished themselves as pioneers and promoters of the campaign for India's political emancipation from the British Imperialist domination over this country. Since the failure of the military revolt against British rule in 1857, the struggle for emancipation took a distinctly different turn and knowledgeable Indians considered it futile to try to be free by resort to violence or armed action. Even before this great military failure, it had dawned on men of foresight and far sight like Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal and Bal Shastri Jambhekar in Bombay that our salvation lay in assimilating western civilisation and culture while retaining the good points of our own and if possible emulating them. But it became quite clear to men who founded the Indian National Congress in the eighties of the last century and efforts of patriots and public men in India, therefore, chiefly lay in following legal and Constitutional, peaceful and legitimate, open and non-violent methods for the achievement of this goal.

This volume attempts to portray profiles of 25 of such stalwarts. It may be remembered that these are in no sense full biographies but just glimpses of the leading men and women for whom we must have gratitude and reverence. The younger generation of Indians should benefit by a study of their careers and characters and derive lessons for themselves when we are all engaged in the task of turning our self-government into good government, a welfare state of the socialist pattern. It is to be hoped that these profiles will whet in them an appetite to study full and comprehensive biographies of the Makers of Modern India.

It would have been better perhaps to entrust these profiles to men and women who had made a close study of each of the celebrity concerned and Mr O. P. Ghai of the University Publishers and I toyed with that idea by asking some eminent men to agree to write them. It was discovered, however, that the scheme was impracticable.

besides being prohibitive in point of cost and Mr. Ghai proposed that I should write all the sketches as best as I could. Perhaps there is an advantage, he said, in bringing one and the same mind to bear upon them. Having seen my treatment of Tilak, Gokhale and Ranade, he decided that I should alone write all the sketches and the reader has them before him for whatever they are worth. Nothing more is claimed than that they are just introductions to the mighty men.

Panjim,

T. V. Parvate.

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## RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY

The name of Raja Ram Mohan Roy is often recalled with reverence as the Father of Modern India or Father of what might be described as the Indian Renaissance. This necessarily begins with the firm establishment of British rule in India, to begin with in Bengal. He laid the foundations of several movements that were calculated to lead India on the path of progress, mainly social and political.

Ram Mohan Roy's name is associated with the then Governor-General of India, Lord William Bentinck, in two main landmarks of his reign. One was the abolition of *Sati* and the other was introduction of English or Western education which Macaulay as one of his councillors strongly advocated. There was much controversy on both these questions but Ram Mohan Roy stubbornly held out in favour of these two reforms. How he was led to make up his mind in favour of the abolition of the practice of *Sati* is worth knowing in a little more detail. A fateful event in his own family left an indelible impression on his mind and he became restless. It acted as a powerful urge in later life and that brought about the abolition of *Sati*.

Ram Mohan Roy had a brother named Jagmohan who died in 1811. His wife was devotedly attached to him and she resolved not to live behind him and so offered herself to be burnt on his funeral pyre. Ram Mohan tried to dissuade her from adopting such a course but he failed. She resolutely ascended the funeral pyre, but when flames began to consume her body, she could not bear them and made an attempt to pull herself out and escape. But her relations considered this as most inauspicious and sacrilegious and they saw to it that she remained stuck up there. They used bamboos against her to keep her in place and drowned her shrieking cries in the noise of drums that they furiously beat.

Ram Mohan considered this as wicked and inhuman. He was stricken with pity and remorse and it preyed much on his mind that he was a helpless witness of that indescribably tragic episode. But, there and then he took the vow that he would release Hindu womanhood from this forced martyrdom. He began his propaganda in

right earnest in his public speeches and writings and roused public conscience, against this monstrous custom which passed under a high-sounding religious sanction. With consummate energy and skill he accomplished his object.

The following testimony from Rev. J. Fox, a noted English missionary of those days may be cited here. He says "There is no doubt that it was greatly through his firmness, his enlightened reasoning and his persevering efforts that the Government of Bengal at last thought themselves enabled to interdict the immolation of widows. His arguments and his appeals to ancient authorities held sacred by the Brahmans, enlightened the minds of many of them and made the merciful intervention of Lord William Bentinck and his Council which was no longer resisted by them and by persons connected with the East India Company at home, as an interference with the religion of the Hindus".

So furious was the agitation that was got up by the orthodox section of the Hindus—and it was possibly much larger than the enlightened section for the retention of the practice of *Sati*—that but for Ram Mohan Roy's indefatigable exertions and sustained, reasoned advocacy, it would have been scarcely possible for Lord William Bentinck alone to add this resplendent feather to his cap, however humane his sentiments and however high-minded his intentions might have been. In 1829 the *Sati* Act was passed and this stain on Hinduism was for ever obliterated.

What pattern of education should prevail in India? That was one more question that tormented the humanitarian Governor-General. There were the Anglicists and the Orientalists, the cleavage between whom was beyond bridging. Macaulay led the Anglicists and he almost despised all oriental learning as worthless. The self-complacent Sanskrit Pandits held that there was nothing to learn from the West. Ram Mohan Roy, the realist, stood between the two. He was himself an accomplished Oriental scholar who knew Sanskrit as well as Persian and Arabic and he would yield to none in his respect for Oriental learning. But his far-seeing vision also made him see its limitations. If education of Indians was confined only to the old Oriental pattern, he clearly saw danger in it.

In a country where false spiritualism had made men only talk big and do little, in other words, where men had only become pretenders and hypocrites, what was wanted was a wholesome

antidote of western learning, a study of natural sciences and a course in taking a practical view of life. Less of other-worldliness and more of healthy materialism—that is what he expected Indians to learn from Western education. He stood for practical *Vedanta*, a phrase which Swami Vivekananda popularised nearly a hundred years after Ram Mohan Roy, but he was also conscious that properly manipulated, even the Vedanta Philosophy would help his countrymen to come out of the slough of superstition and backwardness. With this end in view, he founded the Vedanta College and made provision for instruction there just after his pattern.

Though Ram Mohan Roy was whole-heartedly for the introduction of the English system of education, his efforts did not come to fruition until after two years subsequent to his death. In 1835, the Education Decree which inaugurated the system of English education was passed and Indian youth, began to taste the fruits of English literature and history which paved the way for the rise of Indian nationalism and ideas of democracy, representative government, rule of law and civil liberties including freedom of the press etc.

It may be mentioned here that Ram Mohan Roy was a great champion of freedom of the press and he fully appreciated the mission of the press in educating the people at large on new lines. He was a pioneer Indian journalist. He conducted the *Sambad Kaumudi*, a weekly journal in Bangalee and the *Mirat-ul-Akbar* in Persian, also a weekly for the dissemination of useful knowledge of a historical, literary and scientific character. Discussion of public questions and acts of the administration, in other words, politics was not excluded. While doing this he turned the Bengalee language into an effective vehicle for expressing his thoughts and demonstrated that it could well be a powerful means of popular education. He wrote text-books in Bengalee on Grammar, Geography, Astronomy and Geometry. Whatever contributed to popular education received his enthusiastic support.

He welcomed the efforts of the Christian missions in this direction as much as native efforts. What he was anxious about was that knowledge should be rapidly diffused as far and wide as possible. He was anxious that this knowledge should be scientific, modern, materialistic. In order that popular prejudice against the work of Christian missionaries should disappear, he himself attended their Bible classes and showed that the study of that great religious and literary

work does not and need not lead to proselytism. He himself started an English school, he paid its cost and from this school hailed a man like Devendranath Tagore, who was a leading figure of the Brahmo movement and who gave birth to so illustrious an Indian as Rabindranath Tagore.

Being a journalist himself, he fully appreciated the importance of a free press and so resisted any encroachments on it with vigour. In 1823 was passed a press ordinance which provided that thenceforth no one was to publish a newspaper without securing a licence from the Governor-General in Council. Ram Mohan Roy took a fearless stand against this and presented a memorial signed by leading men of Calcutta. The repeal of the press ordinance was demanded by them. They did not succeed, but their courage was much appreciated. Miss. S. D. Collet who has written a biography of Raja Ram Mohan Roy entitled *Life And Letters of Raja Ram Mohan Roy* has described this memoir as *The Areopagitica of Indian History* which reminds one of Milton's protest against encroachment on the freedom of the press in his day.

Ram Mohan was born in 1772, (1774 according to some) and died in 1833, in Bristol, England. His paternal ancestors were Vaishnavas and maternal ancestors were Shaktas. As a child he showed promise of great intellectual ability and so his father took good care of his education. He soon became an adept in Bengalee, Persian and Arabic and studied the Quran well. After this he went to Benares where he studied Sanskrit and the *Upanishads* and *Puranas*. Having his own mind, he developed great admiration for the monotheistic religious teachings of the *Upanishads* but his faith in Hinduism as he saw it from day to day and from place to place was rudely shaken. When he came home and his father heard his son propound religious doctrines attacking the various rituals and ceremonies and priest-ridden idolatry, his father was shocked. The breach between them went on widening and he had to leave his father's home. He was away from him for about 12 years.

Ram Mohan Roy came back home after his father's death in 1863. He soon published his Persian work with an Arabic preface entitled *Tuhfat-ul Muwahuddin* or *A Gift to Monotheists*. This book purports to be a thesis on the futility of all religious leaders. It seeks to establish that the real basis of all religions is faith in one Supreme Being and that all the rest is mere excrescences. In 1814, he finally settled down in Calcutta and had the companionship of such

intellectuals as Colebrooke, Wilson, Macaulay, Jones and Adam. By now he had made up his mind to wage war on current idolatry and superstitions and on reviving the monotheistic, *Upanishadic* Hinduism of old. With this end in view, he published all the *Upanishads* with their Sanskrit texts with annotations. In 1815, he published the *Vedanta Sūtras* in Bengali. In 1816 came an abridgement of *Vedanta* in Bengali, Urdu and English and subsequently all *Upanishads* were translated in Bengali and English.

Such publications coming out in quick succession caused a veritable sensation in the orthodox circles and Ram Mohan became the subject of severe attacks. He faced them all with vigour and courage and skilfully refuted their arguments in favour of ritualism and priestcraft. Side by side he also met as vigorously the assaults of Christian missionaries on Hinduism. He wanted to study the Christian scripture from original sources and to that end he studied the Greek and Hebrew languages. With the help of his English friends he translated the four gospels into Bengali. In 1820, he published *The Precepts of Jesus, The Guide to Peace and Happiness*. This was a compilation from the four Gospels of the main teachings of Christ. He studiously dropped from it all that related to dogma and miracles. This created quite a furore in the dovecots of Christian missionaries. The Baptists from Serampore vehemently led an attack on him. He did not falter or flag. In close succession, he published three appeals to the Christian public in defence of the precepts of Jesus. In these appeals he reached the highest standard of accuracy and clarity, and the dignity he maintained in all this and the self-restraint, charity and sympathy that was inherent in it, make them a model of controversial writing for all to copy.

With a mind attuned to all modern influences, it is no wonder that Ram Mohan was greatly distracted by the position that Indian womanhood occupied in Indian Society. The apathy and indifference showed by the males to females caused him distress and he demanded on their behalf a fair opportunity of exhibiting their natural capacity. He was unable to take practical steps for women's education but he did a great deal of pioneering to build up public opinion for making such beginnings. The high esteem and respect in which he held the fair sex is evident in all his writings.

In 1822, Ram Mohan published a tract called *Brief Remarks Regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females* in which he attempted to make clear the interest and care which our ancient legislators took in the promotion of the comfort of the

female part of the community; and compared the laws of female inheritance which they enacted and which afforded that sex the opportunity of enjoyment of life with that which modern times and our contemporaries have gradually introduced and established, to their complete privation, directly or indirectly, of most of those objects that render life agreeable." Ram Mohan Roy desired to visit England and he made his intention known to his friend Digby in 1817. An opportunity came when Emperor Akbar II asked him to go as his ambassador to England and place his grievances before the then English King, George IV. He was then given the title of Raja as a mark of dignity and distinction attaching to the position of an envoy. The advocates of *Sati* also intended to appeal against Lord William Bentinck's Act of *Sati* abolition and Ram Mohan thought that he must combat that move in defence of Bentinck. So he sailed from Calcutta in 1830 on November 15, on board the *Albion* and landed at Liverpool on the 18th of April 1831.

Needless to say he achieved all his objectives and left an excellent impression behind on the English people. He was recognised as the best product of Oriental and Occidental influences. In the words of Prof. Max Muller: "For the sake of intellectual intercourse, for the sake of comparing notes, so to say, with his Aryan brothers, Ram Mohan Roy was the first who came from East to West, the first to join hands and to complete that world-wide circle through which, henceforth like an electric current, Oriental thought could run to the West and the Western thought return to the East, making us feel once more that ancient brotherhood which unites the whole Aryan race, inspiring us with new hopes for a common faith, purer and simpler than any of the ecclesiastical religions of the world and invigorating us for acts of noble daring in the conquest of truth than any that are inscribed in the chronicles of our distant past."

Ram Mohan made many friends in England and was received into several English homes as a distinguished guest and friend. The East India Company entertained him to a dinner. He was accorded an honoured place at the coronation of King George IV, and had also an audience with him. The Royal Asiatic Society also honoured him. All this proved very strenuous for him and on 27th September 1833, he died at Stapleton Grove, Bristol. His earthly remains lie interred in Arno's Vale Cemetery at Bristol, where a graceful mausoleum has been raised to him by his grateful fellow countrymen.

## ALLAN OCTAVIAN HUME

EVER since the British set foot on Indian soil, there have been quite many high-minded Britishers who worked in India's interests believing that real British interests and Indian interests were one and indivisible. Their tradition goes back to the days of Burke and Sheridan, Bright and Wilberforce, Macaulay and Elphinstone, Bradlaugh and Besant, Andrews and Horniman. But a paramount place among them all has to be given to Allan Octavian Hume, who has gone down in India's modern history as the founder and father of the Indian National Congress—an institution and a political party to which ultimately the British transferred complete political autonomy.

Who was Hume? In order to realise his personality, it is necessary to bear in mind his parentage and his early surroundings. He was the son of that sturdy and fearless Scottish patriot and reformer Joseph Hume, from whom he may be said to have inherited not only a political connection with India, but also his love of Science, and his uncompromising faith in democracy. He was a radical member of Parliament, one of those who were dreaded and dispraised by the then bigwigs of the Liberal Party.

In 1834, amid universal derision, he attacked the Corn Laws as producing artificial starvation and demanded their repeal. He laboured for extension of the suffrage, for the establishment of the ballot and for the reform of ecclesiastical revenues. He moved for the abolition of sinecures and of flogging in the army. While pursuing British reforms in every department, he did not forget India and on the second reading of Sir Charles Wood's Bill of 1853, to amend the Government of India Act, he spoke for several hours, championing the cause of the Indian people.

Allan Octavian Hume was son of such a father. As a lad his ambition was to enter the Navy but he was destined for the Indian Civil Service. In 1849 he was posted in Bengal at the age of 21; he was born in 1829. In 1882, he resigned the Service. For these 33 years of his service he worked in Etawah as a District Officer both in peaceful times and the stormy days of 1857. Official records show how he laboured successfully as regards popular education, police

reform, liquor traffic, vernacular press and juvenile reformatories. He helped in founding an Indian journal called the *People's Friend* in 1859 in Hindi with his friend Koour Latchman Singh.

Alarmed by the increase in Abkari revenue he wrote, "To me, the constant growth of Abkari revenue is a source of great regret. Year after year but, alas, in vain, I protest against the present iniquitous system which first produced and now supports a large class whose sole interest is to seduce their fellows into drunkenness and its necessary concomitants debauchery and crime. If I be spared a few years longer, I shall live to see effaced in a more Christian-like system one of the greatest blots on our Government of India."

From 1867 to 1870, Hume was Commissioner of Customs for North-Western (present Uttar Pradesh) Provinces. In this capacity, his principal achievement was the gradual abolition of the vast Customs barrier, 2500 miles long, which had been kept up to protect the Government's salt monopoly by excluding the cheap salt produced in the Rajputana States. From 1870 to 1879, he was Secretary to the Government of India.

Lord Mayo, who was then Viceroy, appointed Hume as Secretary to the Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce. Besides matters directly pertaining to agriculture and horticulture, he had to attend to forestry, fisheries, meteorological observations, museums, exhibitions of art and industry, shipping, harbours and lighthouses. But among these diverse and distracting claims, Hume's thoughts were always primarily for the humble ryot and his need for water supply, manure, developed products and improved implements.

While he was thus engaged, his career as a public servant was cut short, because he could not bend his principles to please the official faction at headquarters. What was the cause or causes of his expulsion? Dereliction of duty? Incapacity? No. When Hume respectfully inquired about the reasons of his removal, the platitudinous reply given was that 'the decision was based entirely on the consideration of what was most desirable in the interests of the public service.' It was in substance, a refusal to give any reason whatever, for action altogether out of accord with official precedent. In other words, the decision was whimsical and autocratic.

But if no reasons were forthcoming from the Viceroy or his advisers, public opinion was not slow to give its view of the merits. All press comments on the incident showed that his only offence was



that he was too honest and too independent. The *Pioneer* characterised this proceeding as 'The greatest jobbery ever perpetrated'. The *Statesmen* said, 'Undoubtedly he has been treated shamefully.' The *Indian Daily News* said, 'It was a great wrong.'

But the best statement of the case is contained in an article in the *Englishman* of June 27, 1879 in which referring to the 'measure by which Mr. Hume was summarily superseded and degraded,' the paper said, "The plea advanced in justification of this arbitrary act was that Mr. Hume habitually, in his minutes on measures coming up for discussion in his department, expressed his views with great freedom without regard to what might be the wishes or intentions of his superiors. If he believed in a particular policy to be wrong, he opposed it without hesitation, using plain language for the expression of his views. We cannot find that any other charge has been brought against him."

Hume thus sacrificed a career in the public service rather than accept a policy which must prevent men of rigid principles and unselfish candour becoming responsible advisers of Governors, Viceroys and Secretaries of State. What was, however, loss of the Government turned out to be the gain of the Indian people. He retired from public service in 1882 and plunged himself into the service of the public, the people of India. Towards the close of Lord Lytton's Viceregency i. e. about 1879 Hume was convinced that some definite action was called for to counteract the growing unrest, resulting from economic sufferings of the masses and the alienation of the intellectuals.

Lord Ripon, who succeeded him revived hope among the people and produced a lull. Hume postponed definite organisation until by retirement from service, he should be free to act and able to take advantage of the growing improvement in the popular feeling produced by Lord Ripon's benign presence. His first move towards a definite scheme is to be found in a circular letter dated March 1, 1883, addressed to the graduates of Calcutta University.

This is how the letter opens, "Constituting as you do, a large body of the most highly educated Indians, you should, in the natural order of things, constitute also the most important source of all mental, moral, social, and political progress in India. Whether of the individual or the nation, all vital progress must spring from within and it is to you, her most cultured and enlightened minds, her most

favoured sons, that your country must look for the initiative. In vain may aliens like myself, love India and her children as well as the most loving of these; in vain may they, for her and their good, give time and trouble, money and thought; in vain may they struggle and sacrifice; they may assist with advice and suggestions; they may place their experience, abilities and knowledge at the disposal of the workers, but they lack the essential of nationality and the real work must even be done by the people of the country themselves."

Hume then goes on to point out that scattered individuals, however capable and well-meaning they may be, would be powerless singly but effective as a well-knit body and pleads for union, organisation and well-defined action and in order to secure these suggests a national organisation. "Our little army" he says, must be *Sui generis* in discipline and equipment and the question simply is how many of you will prove to possess, in addition to your high scholastic achievements the unselfishness, moral courage, self-control, and active spirit of benevolence essential in all who should enlist."

Hume then proposed that a commencement should be made with a body of fifty founders to be the mustard-seed of future growth; "If only fifty men good and true, can be found to join as founders, the thing can be established and the further development would be comparatively easy." This long letter to Calcutta University graduates ends with an appeal which is both stirring and stinging, "As I said before, you are the salt of the land. And if amongst you, the elite, fifty men cannot be found with the sufficient power of self-sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish, heartfelt patriotism to take the initiative and if needs be, devote the rest of their lives to the cause—then there is no hope for India. Her sons must and will remain mere humble and helpless instruments in the hands of foreign rulers."

There is a great deal more in this letter in the same strain but these quotations are more than enough to give a fair idea about it. This appeal did not go in vain and the Indian National Congress came into being in December 1885, after a number of confabulations by Hume with Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji, W.C. Bonnerjea, Pherozeshah Mehta, Bodruddin Tyabji, Telang and others. In the initial stages, Lord Reay was suggested as its first President. But that was not found acceptable and Mr. W.C. Bonnerjea was its first President. But later Viceroy's were not as friendly to it and some of them even looked upon it as a seditious body.

How difficult this task was may be said in Gokhale's words. Speaking in London at a Hume memorial meeting, Gokhale said, "No Indian could have started the Indian National Congress. Apart from the fact that any one putting his hand out to such a gigantic task had need to have Mr. Hume's commanding and magnetic personality, even if an Indian possessed such a personality and had come forward to start such a movement embracing all India, the officials in India would not have allowed the movement to come into existence. If the founder of the Congress would not have been a great Englishman and a distinguished ex-official, such was the distrust of political agitation in those days that the authorities would at once have found some way or other to suppress the movement."

Hume died in 1912 but at the beginning of this century, he made another effort to put more vigour in the Congress organisation. He did not want it to remain only a resolution-making body which met once a year and then went to sleep. He received the greatest support in this from Lokamanya Tilak, but the old Congressmen led by Pherozeshah did not make any encouraging response.

Hume was equally frank while dealing with India's public men who strove for political, social or economic uplift of the country. The late Byramji Malabari who moved heaven and earth to stop infant marriages and enforced widowhood among Hindu women sent his notes on the subject to Hume for expression of opinion.

Hume, of course, considered these as great evils and wanted them to be removed. But he saw clearly that Malabari was making too much of it and providing a handle to the reactionaries among Britishers to block India's political progress on the ground that such evils disqualified Indians to enjoy rights of self-government. Hume wrote to say, "I think, you somewhat exaggerate the evil results of these traditional institutions."

Regarding enforcement of widowhood, he said, "I must divide widows into titular or virgin widows, and real widows. As to the former I am satisfied that there is nothing in the *shastras* to prevent their re-marriage. I have no hesitation in earnestly pressing and entreating every good Hindu to make re-marriages customary and thus, as it were, legislate for themselves in this matter." It is interesting to see that Hume's approach to Malabari's activity is very similar to Tilak's.

What were Hume's other interests ? He was a naturalist and a botanist. In his retired life in England, he was not merely engaged in political and parliamentary work. He established and endowed the South London Botanic Institute and his labours in this connection would have alone filled up the life of ordinary man. He personally investigated the Cornish flora, detecting the appearance or disappearance of local rarities, "escapes and" 'undesirable aliens'.

While in India, he worked as an Ornithologist. He conducted a journal called *Stray Feathers* while he was in service. His transfer from Simla to the Revenue Board at Allahabad not only closed a brilliant official career but also dealt disastrous blow to his scientific studies and explorations. He spent about £ 20,000 in accumulating an ornithological museum and library of Asiatic birds. He much regretted that he had to suspend his work on the Game Birds of India on account of his transfer from Simla to Allahabad.

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## DADABHAI NAOROJI

DADABHAI NAOROJI was born on September 4, 1825 and breathed his last on June 30, 1917, at the ripe age of 92. It is customary reverentially to refer to him as the Grand Old Man of India. He came to India as a retired man after 50 years' incessant toil in England for the political emancipation of his country from British domination which for him always meant a place of equality for India in the British Empire with other colonies and dominions.

It is given to but few to live so full and complete a life as Dadabhai Naoroji did. He was a product of the pre-university stage of English education in the Bombay Presidency. His teacher, Balshastri Jambhekar, picked him out for scholastic promotion with unerring judgement and Prof. Orlebar called him the Promise of India. He was the first Indian in many fields—the first Indian Professor of Mathematics at the Elphinstone Institute, the first to found several organisations for the social, intellectual and political uplift of the people of India, the first Indian M. P. in the British Parliament, the first Indian to sit on a Royal Commission viz. the Welby Commission and above all, the first Indian to claim self-Government or Swaraj for India from the platform of the Indian National Congress of which he was thrice elected President.

Starting life as a Professor of Mathematics in 1855, Dadabhai soon exchanged his college for a counting house. He went to England as a representative of Cama and Co., the first Indian business firm to open a branch of theirs in London. But the notes made in those days and left behind him by Dadabhai reveal the real purpose behind this adventure. He was "desirous of seeing an intimate connection established between England and India and particularly to provide a home for young Indians in England so that they might freely go there and compete for the Indian Civil Service and other Services." Before that he had worked for a number of years to spread education and social reform among Parsees and Hindus in Bombay.

How Mahatma Gandhi found Dadabhai in London is worth citing here. Gandhiji sailed for London from Bombay on September

4, 1888, fortified with a letter of introduction on Dadabhai from one who did not know him personally but who told Gandhiji "Everyone knows him and adores him as India's great son and champion. He has exiled himself for us. I claim to know him by his service of India. You will see that my letter will serve you just as well as if I had known him personally. The fact is you need no introduction to him. Your being an Indian is sufficient introduction."

Gandhiji says, "And so it was. When I reached London, I found soon that Indian students had free access to the Grand Old Man at all hours of the day. Indeed he was in the place of father to everyone of them, no matter to which province or religion he belonged. He was there to advise and guide them in their difficulties. I have always been a hero-worshipper. And so Dadabhai became real Dada to me. The relationship took deepest root in South Africa, for he was my constant adviser and inspiration. Hardly a week passed without a letter from me to him describing the condition of Indians in South Africa. And I well remember that whenever there was a reply to be expected, it came without fail in his own handwriting, in his inimitable simple style. I never received a typed letter from him. And during my visits to England from South Africa I found that he had for office, a garret, perhaps eight feet by six feet. There was hardly room in it for another chair. His desk, his chair and his pile of papers filled the room. I saw that he wrote his letters in copying ink and press-copied them himself."

Dadabhai followed this way of life for all the fifty years he spent in England. His tongue was alert and active on every possible platform and in Parliament and so was his pen hard at work and unwearied. He would not miss a single opportunity to interest or influence people, individually or collectively in the cause of his country. Scarcely a week passed when he did not write to the press to criticise some high-handed action of Government, to ventilate a grievance or to correct a wrong impression. He kept on stirring the British public.

As representative of Cama and Co. in England he had two colleagues with whom he could not see his way to agree, because he refused to believe that ordinary morality was different from what was called commercial morality; in other words, fraudulent and deceitful conduct. Dadabhai felt he was called upon to lay in England the foundations of success not merely of his firm, but also of the business

enterprise of Indians generally. He believed that on the credit of his firm and the confidence it inspired in the London market would depend the chances of development of India's trade with the continent.

The consequence of this attitude was that he had to retire from partnership in that firm. He took up another job. In 1856, he was appointed Professor of Gujarati in the University College London. He held that job for ten years. He taught Balshastri Jambhekar's *History of India* to his pupils in London among other books.

During this period. Dadabhai was once in India in 1853. Early in January, 1859 he again left for England. On reaching London he started a new trading firm called Dadabhai Naoroji & Co. It flourished on his principles so as to enable him to render substantial financial assistance to causes like Elphinstone and Jagnnath Shankarshet memorials and a fund for Parsi residents in London. He always acted as if he was an unofficial ambassador of India in London.

These palmy days were soon over. But the gloom of reverses in business was dispelled by Dadabhai's success in other spheres of public usefulness. Pursuit of commerce in England was not an end in itself but a means to an end viz. work for the political and economic well-being of India. To that end he bent his energies.

Dadabhai's first impulse when he went to England was to obtain first-hand knowledge of the cultural and political situation in England. Whilst studying those institutions, he felt more and more convinced that if the British people were true to themselves, true to their imbued sense and traditions of equality, justice and fairplay, they would help India to obtain freedom. This was the faith of Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale also. But the arrogance of the British officials and their ill-concealed contempt for Indian intellect and character were positively destructive of such optimism and therefore these veterans always made a distinction between the British bureaucracy in India on the one hand and the Liberal statesmen among them on the other. Thus came into vogue the phrase 'the better mind of the British public.'

Dadabhai clung to this faith for decades. He went on educating the British public by his tracts, books, speeches, and work in Parliament in cooperation with the better mind of the British public. Indians of similar faith and the Indian National Congress joined in

this effort. The fight went on. Dadabhai in his address at a meeting of Indians in England said, "I have very little doubt that if the British people were once satisfied that India is determined to have self-government, it will be conceded. I may not live to see that blessed day but I do not despair of the result being achieved." How prophetic he has proved !

Dadabhai attempted to get elected to the British Parliament four times, having succeeded only once in 1893. He sat as a Gladstonian Liberal, standing for home rule for Ireland. The whole country was greatly moved by the feelings of the deepest gratitude to the English constituency, Central Finsbury, for having returned an Indian to the British Parliament. Such a thing was possible only in a free country like England. The electors had shown that instincts of political freedom and the fairness of the British public had triumphed in spite of the British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury having described Dadabhai as a 'Black Man.' Hitherto a Bright, a Fawcett, a Bradlaugh or a Caine had earned the gratitude of the Indian people by strenuous advocacy of their country's cause on the floor of the House of Commons. Now, their mantle fell on a son of the soil.

Dadabhai never allowed himself any flagging of enthusiasm while working for the good of his countrymen and India was his daily, nay, hourly thought while in Parliament. One of the ways of awakening the British public to its duty was to have a sort of permanent paragraph inserted in friendly newspapers, calling attention to the grievances of India.

Dadabhai drew up the following paragraph and it appeared regularly in *India* for a long time. It is avowedly propagandist as it was intended to be : "The present system of British rule in India by ever-increasingly plundering and draining away the resources of the people, deliberately produces extreme impoverishment and thereby causes famine, plague and starvation on an ever-increasing scale for some 200,000,000 people.

"Further, the present system is dishonourable, violating the most solemn and Parliamentary pledges and the declared honest policy of the British people. It is, therefore, the duty as also the greatest interest of the British people to put an end to the present deplorable and unrighteous system and compel their Government honestly to take steps to introduce as speedily as practicable self-government like that of the colonies under British paramountcy."



This was before the Morley-Minto Reforms were even thought of and the Liberals had come to power with Morley as Secretary of State for India. It would seem that he was slowly despairing of the British Liberals also doing very much and was coming to lay more store by British Labour. Sir William Wedderburn said in November 1904 at North Lambeth, the constituency that Dadabhai was nursing for the next election that "There was no section of the House with which he (Dadabhai) was more in sympathy and accord than the labour section. If returned, he would, for all practical purposes be an additional Labour member." A striking proof of his socialistic tendencies was that he attended the International Socialist Congress which met at Amsterdam from August 14 to August 20 in 1904. Speaking there, Dadabhai dwelt on the drain of Indian's wealth and poverty of her people saying : "This rests in the hands of the working classes. Working men constitute the immense majority of India and they appeal to the workmen of the whole world and ask for their help and sympathy. Let them condemn the wrongs done in India. We constantly denounce barbarities. What does barbarity mean ? Does it not mean that when a savage knocks down a weak man and robs him, an act of barbarism has been perpetrated ? The same applies to nations and this is the way in which the British Government is treating India. This must end. The remedy is in the hands of the British people. They must compel their Government to fulfil the promises made to India. The remedy is to give self-Government. She should be treated like other British Colonies".

After incessant work for fifty years, Dadabhai was called to preside over the Congress session at Calcutta in 1906, in order to bridge the gulf that was widening between moderate Indian Nationalists led by Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale on the one hand and the militant ones led by Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal on the other. He was welcomed by both the wings. At this Congress Dadabhai in his presidential address said, "Since my early efforts, I must say that I have felt too many disappointments to break any heart and lead one to despair and even, I am afraid, to rebel. But I have not despaired. You may think it strange. I stand before you with hopefulness. I have not despaired for one reason and I am hopeful for another reason. I have not despaired under the influence of the good English word "Persevere". As we proceed, we may adopt such means as may be suitable at every stage, but persevere we must to the end. Now the reason of my hopefulness after all my

disappoints. And this is also under the influence of ( another English word ) 'Revival' the pleasant revival of the true old spirit and instinct of liberty and free British institutions in the hearts of the leading British statesmen of the day ... .. Within the short life they may yet be vouchsafed to me, I hope to see a loyal, honest, honourable and conscientious adoption of the policy of self-government for India and a beginning made at once towards that end."

Dadabhai came to India for good in '913 on the eve of the first world war. He was welcomed back as a triumphant hero by the people of India and every mark of respect was shown to him who was so 'radiant in his retirement. Paying him tribute in 1910 at the Madras Congress, Gokhale felicitously spoke of him as "the foremost Indian of our time, the man without self or without stain, our aged chief who bears on his head the snow of years but carries in his heart the fire of his youth."

How brilliantly this fire burnt in his heart may be judged from the fact that when Mrs. Annie Besant and Lokamanya Tilak set afoot the Home Rule Movement in 1916, he did not hesitate to join it. Mrs. Besant requested him to become the President of All India Home Rule League and even at the age of 90 he readily consented. He was supposed to be the doyen of the moderate wing of the Congress as distinguished from the militant wing and so it was somewhat of an embarrassment to Pherozeshah Mehta and Dinshaw Wacha. Dadabhai did not, however, mind their fulminations and stuck to the promise he had made to Mrs. Besant. But before the Home Rule League was duly constituted Dadabhai was gathered to his forefathers on June 30, 1917.

The late Mr. K. Natarajan, editor of the now defunct 'Indian Social Reformer' wrote a truly thoughtful and really educative editorial when Tilak died. The very first sentence in that obituary runs. "The largest funeral procession witnessed in Bombay in recent years was that of Dadabhai Naoroji; Tilak's totally eclipsed it." These remarks afford us a measure of their popularity in terms of the advance the people had made in their political ideas.

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## MAHADEO GOVIND RANADE

**HISTORICAL** accidents are known to have wholly or considerably changed the course of events. Among such accidents must be reckoned the one that happened to Ranade and consequently to India. Had the order passed on him to go to Malvan, as a Subordinate Second Class Judge been enforced soon after he had taken charge of his duties at Poona in November 1871, the patriotic services that Ranade rendered to his country would have been next to impossible. His association with Poona's educated men as their mentor and monitor must be regarded as providential in the same way in which Ranade looked upon the Indo-British contact as Providential. This accident led to his being recognised and revered as the Father of Public Life in Maharashtra. Shortly afterwards he was highly esteemed as one of the greatest public men who contributed to the rise of renaissance India, even in other parts of the country.

To the present generation of Indians, it is somewhat intriguing that Ranade achieved this great distinction even when he spent his whole life in Government service and that too without neglecting, in the least, the obligations of the high positions he held. He filled the role of a great master and trained public-spirited, altruistically minded workers to implement the plans he formulated. He was not only content to be, but also rejoiced in, being their adviser and guide. His temperament was best suited to play this role and none knew it better than he. He was essentially a man of peace and goodwill towards all and he had no ambition for personal distinction. He did not enter into any competition with anybody, at any time, for anything and always preferred to work from behind somebody.

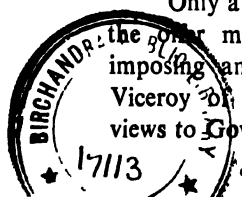
As Gokhale once said the first person singular did not exist in his vocabulary. His only anxiety was to get more and more men interested in the work that he planned for them. The duties of a judicial officer, therefore, suited him best as a means of earning his livelihood. He never felt embarrassed on account of his responsibility to Government for what he was doing. He was consciously satisfied that he was doing his duty to his countrymen consistently with his official duties and without impairing his self-respect. The talents of

such men are appreciated by the powers that be but they scarcely become their favourites. Indeed, Ranade was even treated as a suspect not only during the days of the Vasudeo Balwant revolt, but also when the first sedition trial against Tilak was instituted in 1897 when Ranade was actually sitting on the Bench of the High Court. This did not, however, affect his well-defined and well-meditated course of conduct. He was satisfied that he was doing nothing wrong, nothing disloyal and that maintained his courage of conviction, through good weather and bad.

Ranade was born on January 18, 1842 and breathed his last on January, 16, 1901, so that he was just about to complete 59 years when death overtook him. Ranade firmly believed in the Providential character of British contact with India and he stated it publicly more than once that on the whole the contact had made for India's best interests. He looked up to the British as a pupil would look up to his master. Yet he did not blindly adore everything British. He had an extraordinary sense of discrimination and nobody excelled him in separating bad from good. Thus while he welcomed English administrators, education, institutions, literature and general liberal influence of the British way of living, he wanted a distinct trade and economic policy for India to be adopted by the British administrators themselves. But he utterly failed to rouse their conscience in this behalf.

Ranade was not disheartened on that account. He went on preaching self-help to his countrymen. As far back as in 1871-72, he had preached the doctrine of *Swadeshi*. He incessantly insisted on industrialisation and wanted implementation of an economic development plan. His contributions to the *Sarvajanik Sabha Quarterly* ceaselessly dealt with economic subjects in which advice was given and suggestions were made to the rulers and the people. His approach to every question he dealt with was of so fundamental a character that even when he discussed some particular topic of importance for the time being, his writings make refreshing and profitable reading even today.

Only a year and a half before his death he took advantage of the offer made to him to express his opinion on the question of imposing an import duty on foreign sugar. Lord Curzon was then Viceroy of India. Ranade seized the opportunity to convey his views to Government on their own invitation. He contributed three



articles to the *Times of India* in May and June 1899 to expound his views on India's trade and economic policy while particularising on the sugar industry. In those days the bounty-fed, beet sugar from Austria and Germany inundated the markets of the world and British and French sugar planters and manufacturers in Mauritius suffered. It was, therefore, proposed to levy a protective duty on imports of sugar by the British Government and following the Home Government, the Government of India also wanted to impose a tariff on sugar imports.

The traditional policy followed by Britain was that of free trade and this was a departure from it. Ranade had been pressing for such a departure for years in favour of India's industrial development but without success and so he thought of making the best use of this opportunity. There was really no question of any help coming to an Indian Sugar industry by the adoption of such a policy because, there was no such industry in existence at all, but Ranade welcomed it as a thin end of the wedge of the policy of protection for India. He urged once again a well-defined protectionist policy for India's industrial development and protested against the indifference shown till then in this behalf. These three articles, besides his essays and lectures referred to before, richly qualify him to be recognised as the father and founder of Indian Economics.

But this is not the only count on which his title to free India's gratitude rests. He was a patriot who guided his fellowmen on various fronts and he did this after doing full justice to his main job which was throughout Government Service. He is universally referred to as Justice Ranade because from 1893 till he died he worked as a judge of the Bombay High Court on the appellate side. But to say that he was an eminent High Court Judge is to say nothing about him. He was a social reformer, a history research scholar, a protagonist of the cause of Indian languages (called vernaculars in his day) and he had taken a prominent part in founding the Indian National Congress along with Dababhai, Hume and Wedderburn. He was also a religious reformer and a preacher and theologian of great popularity on the pulpit of the Prarthana Samaj of Bombay.

It was once said that Ranade's greatest achievement perhaps was Gokhale, for Ranade took Gokhale up as a young man in his early twenties and trained him as an unrivalled constructive political worker. Lesser known is his another achievement viz. his wife, Mrs.

**Ramabai Ranade.** If Ranade was older than Gokhale by 24 years, Mrs. Ranade was younger than Ranade by 20 years. She was a totally illiterate girl of 12 when at the age of 32 he married her. He himself became her teacher and before long she became a well-educated and accomplished lady. Her work in the Sewa Sadan of Poona and Bombay is well known.

Ranade was the most unassuming of men although he towered above all his contemporaries. Speaking about his piety and humanity. Gokhale said that had he been born a couple of hundred years ago, he would have been ranked with saints like Ekanath and Tukaram. Social reform for him meant the reform of man, an individual man and the aim of all reform work according to him was "to renovate, to purify and also to perfect the whole man by liberating his intellect, elevating his standard of duty and perfecting all his power." Acknowledging his debt to public life in India Tilak in his obituary on Ranade said, "If there is forthrightness and intrepidity in the public life of Maharashtra and if Mahratta publicists are fearlessly expressing themselves on matters of public interest, there can be no manner of doubt that it is the result of Ranade's ceaseless and pains-taking work for over 25 years." He has clearly demonstrated that there was much in their doings during a period of 150 years of sovereign rule that must evoke admiration and that singles them out as a people whose rise was not "a mere accident due to any chance combination but was a genuine effort on the part of a Hindu nationality, not merely to assert its independence, but to achieve what had not been attempted before the formation of a confederacy of states, animated by a common patriotism and that the success it achieved was due to a general up-heaval—social, religious, political—of all classes of the population."

Of Ranade it could be said truly and with full justification that circumstances did not permit him heroic actions or better still he was not temperamentally so inclined but was moulded for the roll of a constructive nation-builder. Calmness and steadiness of mind which he possessed in an extraordinary measure prevented him from being exhilarated or excited and allowed him to work patiently and increasingly without being upset or depressed. Through severe discipline applied to himself, he developed marvellous self-control, forbearance and equanimity. No man judged himself more severely or others more charitably than Ranade. He was scarcely known to lose his temper or return abuse for abuse. He readily forgave, harboured no resentment and made no enemies. He chose the path of conciliatory

cooperation for steady progress in all directions and mentally equipped himself for the same. As Gokhale said, "His saintly disposition even more than his intellectual gifts, won for him the devoted admiration and attachment of large numbers of his countrymen throughout India." The normal state of his mind, again on Gokhale's authority, "was one of quiet cheerfulness, arising from a consciousness of work well done and from humble faith in the purpose of Providence. But even when he was seriously displeased with anything or disappointed with any one or suffered inwardly owing to other causes, no one, who did not know him intimately would detect any trace of that suffering on his face. And never did any one, not even those who stood nearest to him, hear him utter a word of complaint against those who might have done him personal injury."

Ranade's keen interest in Mahratta History dates back to his undergraduate days. It cost him rather dearly as he had to lose a good scholarship. Yet this subject occupied his attention almost till he died, because his *Rise of the Mahratta Power* was published in 1900 and his studies of the hey-day and decline of that power were by no means complete by the time he was no more. As Ranade has explained in his preface to this book, it was a joint plan of Ranade and Telang to write a complete history of the Mahrattas. As it happened, however, Telang died prematurely and even Ranade could but do the work half-way through. It was Ranade's intention to deal with the progress of the Mahratta confederacy in the Second Volume.

The Ranade—Telang plan originated in their desire to put, in the proper perspective, the place of the Mahrattas and their achievements in the history of India by rectifying the mistakes and mis-representations of the British writers like Grant Duff who in their turn had mainly depended on Persian sources for their treatment and interpretation. The tradition among British writers of India's history was to regard the part played in it by the Mahrattas as not of much consequence. Ranade pointed out that it was a serious error of judgement, if it was not deliberate suppression of obvious facts. Ranade's service to the history of India and the Mahratta nationality lies in this that he established it beyond doubt for universal understanding that the British had to defeat the Mahrattas and wrest power from their hands before establishing their sway in Western and Central India and that, though discomfited, they were quite enlightened rulers who had to succumb to a people of superior civilisation.

What his public addresses were like may be studied with the help of the late Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri who while paying him his birth centenary tribute in Bombay said. "The published speeches have solidity and mental nutriment which are astonishing. One may go again to them with profit. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar's eulogy is not overdone. 'Those were weighty and eloquent annual addresses, wise with the wisdom of the heart, powerful with all the power of his great intellect, majestic with the majesty of his lofty and commanding personality.' There is no art either in the sentences or in their grouping. You don't come across a light, humorous remark ; no passing allusion to the trivialities of thought or gossip. The nearest he comes to a joke is when he asks : 'Shall we revive the old habits of our people when the most sacred of our caste indulged in all the abominations, as we now understand them, of animal food and drink which exhausted every section of our country's Zoology and Botany ?' If we were stronger and more manly, more prudent, more abstemious and more thoughtful, millions would not live and breed as if they were members of the brute creation, and not men and women made in the image of God for a higher purpose than to live and die like the butterflies.' The joke and the indignation are alike grim. As you read through, you seem to see Ranade slowly assembling the details from one quarter and from another, inviting your gaze to the accumulation, and slowly and patiently leading you to a realization of your duties and prospects. The style is by no means varied, picturesque or pleasing. But it is weighty without being homiletic. One reader complains that Ranade has no partiality for Anglo-Saxon. Another grumbles that grammar and idiom do not get the respect due to them. A third is deadened by the frequent inelegances and solecisms. But all are subdued to attention by the dignity of the indiction and the high level on which the argument moves without once declining on a false or discordant note. When you are lifted above the small and the grovelling, when you are freshened by the gentle breezes of the upper air, you forget the unsightly objects you have left behind and the inconveniences through which you have ascended. Or may be you feel a tourist that has been dragged through mean lanes and pebbly tracks, and suddenly finds himself entering a stately edifice with imposing corridors and noble columns and spacious halls, the ensemble harmonising in every part and ravishing his inner soul with a beauty of proportion and symmetry of which he had never dreamed. Criticism is hushed,



judgement is awed, and the only feeling left is one of joy and complete satisfaction."

A saint in people's political and social affairs is a description that fits Ranade even more than it did Gandhiji. Ranade believed in complete liberty. He stood for the liberation of Conscience from external authority; the country from political, and economic domination and of the intellect from prejudices, prepossessions, beliefs and superstitions. But he could not help those who held God himself as a superstition ! He was a confirmed, incorrigible theist !

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## SURENDRANATH BANERJEA

AN Englishman who heard Surendranath Banerjea at some meetings in England wrote of his oratory in the following terms; "Experienced speakers in and out of Parliament found in Surendranath a great deal that recalled the sonorous thunders of William Pitt, the dialectical skill of Fox, the rich freshness of illustration of Burke and the keen wit of Sheridan."

The oratory which evoked such spontaneous tributes would never have been as effective as it was, had it not been founded on a sturdy patriotism and a fine public spirit. Throughout his life, he was one of the most brilliant of the shining lights of the Indian National Congress, two of whose annual deliberations he was called to preside over. He was unable to attend the first inaugural session in Bombay in 1835, but thereafter he never missed a single session.

Surendranath was born in Calcutta in 1848 in a Brāhman family and was the second son of the five of Babu Durga Charan Banerjea, who was an Allopathic practitioner. His early schooling was in a *pathashala* but at the age of seven he was sent to Doveton College where he was constantly thrown in the company of Anglo-Indian youths. In 1863 he passed the matriculation examination of the Calcutta University with Latin as his second language. He graduated in 1868.

The then Principal of Doveton College had a very high opinion of Surendranath's abilities and on his recommendation he was sent to England in 1868 to compete for the I. C. S. examination. In 1869 he passed the I.C.S., his other Indian companions being Ramesh Chunder Dutt, Beharilal Gupta and Shripad Babaji Thakur. There was some misunderstanding regarding his having given his age wrongly but it was removed on proper representation of his case. He came back to India in 1871 and was posted as Assistant Magistrate of Sylhet.

Surendranath was not, however, destined to remain an I. C. S. On some flimsy pretexts, his British superior officers contrived to show defects in his work. A commission of inquiry was appointed,

the charges made against him were investigated and the verdict was that Surendranath was guilty of serious dereliction of duty. Government dismissed him from service with a pension of Rs. 50 a month. He went to England to plead his case but was not successful in getting justice done to him.

What was, however, the loss of the I. C. S. was the gain of the country. Indeed, he became, since so prominent in various public movements in Bengal and particularly in the Indian National Congress that it is impossible to think of the Congress without him. He began his life anew as a teacher, because in 1876, he was appointed Professor of English Language and Literature in the Metropolitan Institution, Calcutta. In 1882 he started a school of his own. In the course of seven years, the school grew to become a college which was named after the Viceroy, Lord Ripon. The college still enjoys the reputation of being one of the best-managed educational institutions in the country.

Surendranath like his contemporary patriots of the Fergusson College in Poona was not satisfied with confining his attention to Ripon College students. He began to address and educate a much larger audience by taking up the editorship of the *Bengalee*. It was started by W. C. Banerjea, President of the first session of the Indian National Congress in Bombay, during the stormy days of Lord Lytton. Surendranath threw himself heartily in its work and it soon became a powerful organ of public opinion and a vehicle of mass education. It was subsequently converted into a daily and particularly distinguished itself during the Ilbert Bill controversy during which Anglo-Indians and their press transgressed all limits of decency and their race arrogance became boundless.

While Surendranath was in the midst of the Ilbert Bill controversy, he was accused of contempt of court, found guilty by a majority vote of European judges and sentenced to two months' imprisonment. What happened was, the *Bengalee* criticised the conduct of Mr. Justice Norris who had in a case before him ordered the production of a Hindu household idol of Shaligram in evidence. This was tantamount to hurting and offending Hindu orthodox religious feelings. Incidentally this judge had taken a partisan attitude in the Ilbert Bill controversy which ill became his position as a High Court Judge. Even when Surendranath offered an apology on the advice of his lawyer W. C. Banerjea, he was sentenced to imprisonment.

Surendranath's account of the public reaction to the sentence passed on him and his analysis of the considerations that stimulated various sections of the community, have an important bearing on the state of public feeling at the time. He writes in his *Making of a Nation*, "The news of my imprisonment created a profound impression not only in Calcutta and in my own province but throughout India. In Calcutta, on the day of imprisonment, the Indian shops were closed and business was suspended in the Indian part of the town, not by order, or by an organised effort, but under a spontaneous impulse which moved the whole community. The students went into mourning. The demonstrations held in Calcutta were so large, that no hall could find space for the crowds that sought admittance; the bazars were utilised for the purpose. Then was first started the practice of holding open air meetings, and these were demonstrations, not confined to the upper ten thousand or the educated classes; the masses joined them in their thousands. Hindu feeling had been touched. A Hindu god had been brought to a court of law; and whatever the legal merits of the case might have been (and with these the general public do not trouble themselves), the orthodox Hindu felt, rightly or wrongly, that there had been an act of desecration. The educated community, though sympathising with their orthodox countrymen, were impelled by motives of a different order. The Ilbert Bill controversy, in which Mr. Justice Norris had unfortunately taken a prominent part, unbecoming his judicial position had roused them to a fever heat of excitement. They further felt that a sentence of a fine as in the Taylor case, cited by Mr. Justice Mitter, would have been sufficient, and they scented in the sentence of punishment of imprisonment inflicted on me a flavour of party feeling unworthy of the traditions of the highest Judicial Bench.

"In the whole course of my public life, I have never witnessed except in connection with the agitation for the modification of the Partition of Bengal, an upheaval of feeling so genuine and so widespread as that which swept Bengal in 1883. Public meetings of sympathy for me and of protest against the judgement of the High Court were held in almost every considerable town. So strong was the feeling that in some cases even Government servants took part in them and suffered for it. But these demonstrations were not of an evanescent order. They left an enduring impress on the public life of the province."

This may be considered as the initial, most important triumph of Surendranath. After his release from jail, he made a tour of northern India and everywhere he was received with enthusiasm. As editor of the *Bengalee* his contribution to the building up of Indian nationalism was invaluable. It was second to none in its educative campaign during the regimes of repression, reform, terrorism and constitutional agitation. Before he joined the Congress he and Anand Mohun Bose had built up the Indian Association to air public grievances and to make demands on the powers that-be.

In 1893 he appeared before the Welby Commission as a witness and greatly strengthened the hands of Dadabhai, Wacha and Gokhale.

The partition of Bengal in 1905, effected by Lord Curzon notwithstanding the strong opposition of the Bengalees, threw up a number of leaders who organised public opinion and suffered for it. Surendranath stood at the head of them all. The spirit of Swadeshi filled the air and boycott, its counterpart caught public imagination. There were bonfires of foreign cloth as a protest against the partition. But far from respecting public opinion, the partition was declared to be a settled fact. The Bengalees, with the support of all India were out to unsettle it, some of them by whatever means possible, including violence. Surendranath in his *A Nation in the Making* has summarised the events of those days very modestly and has not said much about his role in the anti-partition movement, but every Indian knows that he was at the head of it.

Surendranath was very popular as a Professor among the students. His eloquence, fed on inspiration from Mazzini and matured by the study of English liberal classics charmed the undergraduates of the Ripon College and elsewhere so much that they became ready to carry out any of his behests. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he believed in allowing students to participate in politics subject to proper control and guidance. So he did not hesitate to draw the young men in the agitation against the Partition of Bengal. But after that and in the light of subsequent experiences in his last years, he modified his views to some extent because he found that "Some of our young men have displayed an unpardonable intolerance of views opposed to their own and there have been demonstrations of rowdiness." He found that when discipline was the soul of student life, its bonds had been relaxed and a spirit of disorder was gaining ground, but he hoped that it was only a passing phase.

Acknowledging his debt to the classics of the English language he observed, "My professional work greatly helped me to teach the classics of the English language. Among them were the speeches and writings of Edmund Burke, *Froude*, Lord Morley and others. I thus lived in constant association of the great masters of the English language and in close familiarity with their vocabulary and methods of thought and to none I owe a greater debt than Edmund Burke whose political philosophy has so largely moulded my own views about Government and Society."

Similar was the experience of Gopal Krishna Gokhale who taught at the Fergusson College and while teaching history drew much on the struggles for liberty the British people went through. He cited illustrations from the history of Ireland, Italy and France and his apt parallels created such enormous interest in that subject among the students. Gokhale, however, was more cautious in his approach to the question of student participation in active politics. He wanted them to confine their interest only to study of political questions.

The Partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911 and although there were spasmodic outbreaks of violence from time to time, the country appeared to be sullenly settled to cooperate in the working of the Morley-Minto reforms. Surendranath who was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council since an elective element was introduced in the Indian Legislative bodies, was elected once again. But something like a real chance to show his constructive abilities came only with the inauguration of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms when dyarchy was introduced in the Provinces and popularly elected men became Ministers with transferred departments in their charge on a basis of equality with Executive Councillors as regards status and pay.

Surendranath has devoted a number of pages in his autobiographical book to describe his experiences as Minister of Local Self-Government under the Montford reforms in Bengal. The policies he laid down, the men he met in the services and in the public and the cooperation he secured from the Governor of the Province in carrying out the policies he laid down in the departments entrusted to him constitute very interesting features of this account. It would seem that he made a successful Minister and by his work he established that within the limits of his powers he did everything and further demonstrated that his hands were tied to do more, because of financial stringency.

Either the Reserved Half of the Executive had generously to provide funds for more efficient working of the transferred departments or immediate Provincial Autonomy had become a pressing demand, but the implementation of that could be secured only by an Act of Parliament which would revise the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Act.

He thus demonstrated by actually working the Montagu-Chelmsford Act to the best of his ability that it was "unsatisfactory, disappointing and inadequate" from the viewpoint of satisfying Indian political aspirations and so an early revision was necessary.

Surenranath contested the 1923 general election but was defeated by the Swarajist upsurge led in Bengal by C. R. Das. He died at the age of 77 on August 6, 1925 after finishing his memoirs which are an unfailing and dependable guide to his ambitions and principles which guided his public life. His remarks in the chapter entitled 'Conclusion' are given his mature thoughts. He has ended by pleading with his countrymen for a policy of cooperation and not non-cooperation, assimilation and not isolation. Any other policy, he said was, fraught with peril to our best interests and suicidal. His last words which he calls a message are : "That is my message to my countrymen, delivered not in haste or impatience, but as the mature result of my deliberations and of my life-long labours in the service of the motherland."

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## PHEROZESHAH MEHTA

A FAIR and proper idea of the power and influence of the late Sir Pherozeshah Mehta in the Indian National Congress till he died in November 1915 could be adequately given by saying that it was similar to the power and influence that Gandhi enjoyed during the period that began with the non-cooperation movement and ended with his assassination in 1948. The 1915-session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay and Pherozeshah wanted that session to say ditto to all that he had in mind. For that purpose he decided to enlist the services of Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha (later Lord Sinha and Under-Secretary of State for India). He was not very willing to come. But Pherozeshah telegraphed him to say 'You dare not refuse' and the ex-law Member of the Government of India meekly submitted.

That was the last occasion when it was demonstrated that his will was law to Congressmen of those days. The important question in the air at the time was whether the followers of Tilak who were kept out of the Congress since the Surat session held at the end of 1907 and his subsequent incarceration in Mandalay for six years should be allowed to re-enter the Congress. Congressmen like Surendranath Banerjea, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Bhupendranath Basu and the new star in the political firmament of India Mrs. Besant favoured such entry but Pherozeshah Mehta and his lieutenants Dinshaw Wacha and N.M. Samarth were totally against it. Even Gokhale was anxious that the militant Congressmen led by Tilak called extremist in those days should return to the Congress, but he ultimately decided to follow Mehta and their entry in 1914 at the Madras session was prevented. Gokhale died in February 1915. Mehta adhered to his view but before the 1915 session was held, he also breathed his last and Wacha and Samarth were unable to hold out against the general opinion in the country. In 1916 at Lucknow Tilak and his followers were warmly welcomed back by the President of the session Ambica Charan Muzumdar.

Pherozeshah's opposition was, however, based on principle. He held that there was an essential incompatibility of temperament between the Moderates and the Militants and their cooperation in the



same organisation was impossible. In a letter to Sir Bhupendranath Basu he had clearly stated his position saying, "I cannot help saying that there is a great deal of mawkish sentimentality in the passionate appeals for union at all costs. For my part, I think it is most desirable that each set of distinct convictions should have its separate Congress. To jumble them up in one body confuses the real understanding of the extent to which opinion really tends in one direction or another and it is not possible to make out what are the dimensions of cleavage and difference of opinion existing on any particular question. It is, therefore, desirable that persons nearly holding the same opinions and principles should organise themselves into bodies where they can expound them and lay them before the public in a clear and consistent form. The public could then have the issues clearly before them and their deliberate judgement can declare itself by the growing favour they would accord to any particular association. For God's sake, let us have done with all inane and slobbery whine about unity where there is really none. Let each consistent body of views and principles have its own Congress in an honest and straightforward way and let God i.e. truth and wisdom judge between us all."

Pherozechah behaved in the same autocratic manner when changing the venue of the 1907 Congress Session from Lahore to Nagpur and from there to Surat. He was elected President of the Congress Session at Lahore in 1910 but at the eleventh hour he changed his mind and left the Reception Committee disconcerted. All Provinces were in his favour but only Bengal was against him. At the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Hooghly in August 1910, i.e. a few months before the session of the Congress it had attempted to prepare the ground for a United Congress. The election of Pherozechah by the Reception Committees was in order, but unpopular with Bengali politicians generally, as also with some people in Lahore itself. There was every indication that the approaching session would be far from peaceful.

When matters were in this state, one fine morning, just before the due date the country was startled by the news that Pherozechah had suddenly resigned the Presidentship of the Congress. The telegram which conveyed the decision to Lala Harkishanlal, Chairman of the Reception Committee was as brief as it was enigmatic. It said, "I deeply regret that owing to a combination of unexpected circumstances, I am compelled to relinquish the honour".

Pherozeshah's biographer, Sir Homi Mody, touching this incident says "The country was bewildered. Not even the closest friends of Pherozeshah suspected his intentions or could guess at the reasons that prompted this extraordinary step which threw the Congress into utter confusion. The President-elect was as silent and mysterious as the Sphinx. This became thick with rumours and surmises. Some said that Pherozeshah lost faith in his former political fellows and associates and did not care again to run the risk of insult and molestation. The others declared that while Pherozeshah was well aware of the strong feeling against him in certain circles, accepted the Presidency in the anticipation that the opposition would gradually evaporate in the face of the settled fact. Finding that this was not the case, and that in fact only a very few days before, criticism had been strongly expressed, with characteristic impulsiveness, he had suddenly decided to resign rather than occupy a position, his fitness for which was not acquiesced in by all parties."

In his lectures on Pherozeshah Mehta delivered at Madras before a select audience, the Rt. Hon. Sastri said about the same incident, "People did not know what to do. They sent frantic messages and telegrams to him but his attitude was most annoying." He said, "I won't see anybody; I won't talk to anybody. I don't want to make a statement further than that I won't go to Lahore." People said all sorts of things about him. "The poor old man is frightened. He knew that the Extremists would hit the shoe more accurately now than they did at Surat." Some people said his life would be in danger. We do not know to this day the cause but I will tell you one gossip which was believed in certain circles and in our Society also. It was that his wife, Lady Mehta had put her foot down and prevented him from going; just as Calpurnia did when Cæsar went to the Senate, the only difference being that Lady Mehta succeeded while Calpurnia failed. It was the belief in the Servants of India Society that she took fright because many people had frightened her that she would soon be widowed, if she allowed her husband to go to Lahore."

Whatever that may be, the whole episode did not leave a palatable taste behind. Pherozeshah's place was taken by Pandit Malaviya and the Lahore Congress session was quite successful. What is remarkable, however, is that the Congress put up with this behaviour on the part of Mehta and the Moderates paid him the same homage as before. He was in no sense lowered in their estimation.

Majestic in appearance and stately in his manners Pherozeshah Mehta was endowed with wonderful intellectual power. Having returned from England as a member of the bar in 1868, he put to immediate use the training in public life he had received from Dadabhai Naoroji in his student days, and from that year onwards, until his death in 1915, he devoted the whole of those 47 years to brilliant service of the country. He often sacrificed quite lucrative briefs in order to be present in the Bombay Municipal Corporation or at a session of the Bombay Legislative or the Supreme Legislative Council. An instance of his constructive political talent might be cited here. Having entered the Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1868, he read three years later a paper on Bombay Municipal Reform before the Bombay Branch of the East India Association. He was then only 26 years old and the briefs were not too numerous on his hands. The constitution that he then embodied in his paper for the Municipal Corporation was adopted by the Government of Bombay substantially in all essential respects. It remains the same in most respects but for the liberalisation of the franchise and the general democratisation in keeping with the spirit of the times. He is rightly remembered as the father of Civic life in Bombay and his magnificent statue in front of the Bombay Corporation building is a symbol of the same.

At the sittings of the Indian National Congress, in the Bombay Legislative Council and the Viceregal Legislative Council. Pherozeshah Mehta made contributions to debate all matters of public importance which were not only unsurpassed in brilliant phrasing but also in practical sagacity. Great as a speaker, he was the greatest debater that India ever produced. As for his courage and independence, very few equalled him. Fear was totally unknown to him and he was a born leader of men. This was recognised by two such great men as Gokhale and Tilak, the former his faithful political follower and the latter, his greatest political opponent.

Describing Pherozeshah's personality, the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri said that he attracted men in a strange way. 'Sir Pherozeshah Mehta seemed to dominate those who went near him. When you saw him full in the face, there was a squint in his eyes which fixed you almost. You felt that you were in his power. I have seen him speak in the Legislative Council with authority and vigour that drew everybody's attention to him; and I have seen how, when any member of the Council spoke, even two or three minutes, he used to turn to

know what impression he was producing on this master of the House. He had a rich and sonorous voice; when he was speaking to an audience, without effort, he could be heard in the most distant corner. Even his whispers did not fail to catch your attention. His diction was dignified and powerful and when he chose to criticise people, it was such as hit hard. If he was minded to attack a person, there was no mercy in the way he handled him. He could be rough if he pleased; he could be gentle also. There was a wide range of voice which Gokhale for instance, utterly lacked. No one could resist the charm of his personality. Dr. Rutherford, a Liberal Member of Parliament who came to India in the winter of 1907 wrote in the *Manchester Guardian* that Pherozeshah Mehta would be "The first man in the political kingdom in my country," that in England, he would have been Prime Minister but having been born in a subject country his life was condemned to barren criticism. This is reminiscent of an observation that Tilak made about Ranade. Tilak said that the Government of the country must be considered singularly unfortunate that the biggest place that it could find for Ranade was a High Court judgeship.

Pherozeshah's temperament, equally with his early training, was a great asset. He was a robust optimist and he faced the problems of the day with serene courage and confidence. The hatred of enemies, the indifference of friends and the hostility of those in power and authority failed to shake his faith in the ultimate triumph of the cause he had expounded and in the methods and principles by which he was guided. As he repeatedly said, he always sought hope and consolation in the words of the poet.

"I have not made the world.

And he that has made it, will guide."

It was this cheery optimism which sustained him through all the difficulties and disappointments of his long and arduous career. It sustained him through the early struggles of the Congress, when he and his associates had to contend with hostility and ridicule on the one hand and indifference and backsliding on the other.

Pherozeshah was by far the greatest political leader India has ever seen. He never appealed to the masses in the way Dadabhai, Tilak or Gandhi did. His hold was mainly on the educated classes and those who led them. His impressive presence, personality and powers of mind dominated all who worked with him or followed him.

As was once observed of Gladstone, "When he spoke he uplifted the debate from whatever rut of mediocrity it may have fallen into. That was the power of the orator. When he sat silent, his mere presence communicated to the House a sense of dignity and a moral strength easier to feel than describe. That was the quality of the man." It was remarkable how the many gifted men with whom he was associated in various spheres of public life allowed their will and judgement to be subordinated to his. Gokhale was the most eminent example of this. Wacha was a very discerning and independent man but he was Pherozeshah's yes-man. Setalvad, Jinnah, Baptista, Jayakar—all had their early lessons in Public Life in Pherozeshah's chambers.

Although Mehta and Gokhale belonged to the same political camp, differences often arose between them because of their dissimilar temperaments. Mehta wholly disapproved of Gokhale's deal with Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha in connection with the Press Act and clearly held that Gokhale ought to have voted against it instead of remaining neutral as he did. In the earlier days of Gokhale's legislative career, Mehta did not like the softness of Gokhale towards the bureaucracy in Bombay because it was totally impervious to popular pressure. He did not also approve of the South African settlement which Gokhale and Gandhi concluded with General Smuts in 1914.

*Whatever* that may be, Gokhale always looked up to Pherozeshah Mehta as his leader, senior and one whose views were not merely entitled to respect, but entire acquiescence. He had great confidence in Mehta's political instinct and judgement. What exactly he thought about him was brought out best when some leading Europeans in Bombay, backed by the *Times of India* rose in revolt in 1904 against Pherozeshah's leadership of and position in the Bombay Municipal Corporation. Gokhale came all the way from Calcutta, where he was doing his duties as member of the Supreme Council because he was summoned to take the chair at an enormous public meeting held at Madhav Baug, Bombay to give expression to 'he feelings of resentment and indignation felt by the citizens of Bombay at the Europeans attempt to oust Pherozeshah out of the Corporation. Gokhale's presence at the meeting drew all India's attention to what was merely a local matter. Gokhale said at this meeting.

"A man with the great, transcendental abilities of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, placing those abilities freely and unreservedly at the disposal of his city for nearly 40 years is bound to attain a position of

unrivalled predominance in any corporation and in any country. That such a man should tower head and shoulders above his fellow-men after such a record is only to be expected and those who complain of this, quarrel with the very elements of our human nature. Such predominance implies deep gratitude on the part of those to whose service a great career has been consecrated, joined to that profound confidence in the wisdom and judgement of the leader, which goes with such gratitude. Sir Pherozeshah's position in the Corporation is no doubt without a parallel in India; but there is a close parallel to it in the mighty influence exercised by Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham and it is not dissimilar to the position occupied by Lord Palmerston for many years in Whig England and later by the great Gladstone in the counsels of the Liberal Party."

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## ROMESH CHUNDER DUTT

NEXT to Ranade it is Romesh Chunder Dutt among the patriots and publicists of the old Congress Guard who distinguished themselves by their versatile services to the country while remaining in Government Service. Romesh Chunder Dutt was born on August 13, 1848 and died on November 30, 1909 as the Dewan of the progressive Baroda State. While Ranade died when he was about to complete 60 years of his age, Dutt died just after completing 61 years.

Under the loving care of his uncle, because his parents died when he was a young lad, Romesh Chunder matriculated from Hare School in Calcutta in 1864 and studied later in the Presidency College. In 1868 he sailed for England to compete for the I.C.S., his other colleagues being Surendranath Banerjea, Bihari Lal Gupta and Shripat Babaji Thakur. More about what happened to them in London may be read in the sketch of Surendranath Banerjea in this series.

Romesh Chunder passed the open competitive examination in 1869. He stood third in the order of merit. In the midst of English influences, he remained an Indian while imbibing all that was good in western culture and civilisation. What his vision of India's future was when he was about to leave English shores for India may be gathered from the following extract from a letter he wrote then :

“We in India have an ancient and noble civilisation. Our children's children will live to see the day when India will take her place among the nations of the earth in manufacturing industry and commercial enterprise, in representative institutions and in real social advancement. May that day dawn early for India !”

Romesh Chunder's natural inclination was towards literature and scholarship. He showed this by writing his experiences in England and on the continent {by recording his impressions and observations in a book called *Three Years in Europe*. Written in a clear and fascinating style, it has become a reliable record of the historical, literary, political and social trends in Europe of those days in general and England in particular. His remarks and descriptions also touch life in France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland.

On return to India in 1871, he was allotted to Bengal and till 1883 he was junior officer in the Indian Civil Service. His whole career shows that he was a kind but firm officer and he conscientiously exerted to do his best for the good of the people committed to his care. Whether it was famine relief work or flood relief work or plague relief work, he did not spare himself.

In 1876, he specially distinguished himself in the restoration of normal life in Dakshin Shahabapur which is an island district in the mouth of the Ganges and is mostly inhabited by Bengali Mussalmans. About one lakh of people died there overnight as a result of a cyclone and storms wave. They were simply drowned. All dwelling-places were destroyed, all land and boundary marks were obliterated and all movable property including cattle was dispersed helter-skelter. Administrative machinery totally broke down and the cholera epidemic arose out of it to cause further misery to those who survived.

To a young and not very experienced officer that Romesh Chunder then was, this must have meant a terrible strain on his energy, intelligence, tact and executive capacity. In one of his works known as *Famines and Land Assessments in India*, he wrote later, he paid a well-merited tribute to the cooperation he received from the suffering people. He said, "the Mussalman population of Dakshin Shahabazpur, a sturdy and self-reliant race, faced the worst season with admirable courage and helped themselves under the most trying circumstances."

In holding the interests of the people committed to his care, he never shrank from incurring the displeasure of the European Indigo planters of Bengal which constituted a powerful force in those days. When Sir Ashely Eden who was then Governor of Bengal relinquished his office, Romesh Chunder while yet in service did not hesitate to write candidly in the *Statesman* a review of his career which showed his independence of character and soundness of judgement. It is reminiscent of what Ranade wrote about Sir Richard Temple's Governorship of Bombay in *The Sarvajanic Sabha Quarterly*. Romesh Chunder said, "The good he did to the oppressed ryots over twenty years ago, the good which he is trying to do to the cultivators now will live and bear fruit; his personal rule, his attempts to crush a young press, however wayward, his efforts to stamp out the young aspirations of Bengal will all vanish with him."

Soon after his return from England, Dutt published a little book called *The Peasantry of Bengal* in which he dealt with a number



of agrarian problems of Bengal. The Permanent Settlement of 1793, effected by Lord Cornwallis never took into consideration the interests of the real peasants, the tenant-cultivators and as there was no amelioration of their conditions, agrarian disturbances had occurred from time to time.

Dutt prescribed remedies which were resented by the land-owning class but ultimately led to the passing of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1865 in which they were embodied. Dutt pleaded "there is only one way left before Government to enact a permanent settlement between the Zamindar and the ryot, as a permanent settlement has been enacted between the Zamindars and Government" and that was done.

Dutt saw service in many districts and his administrative ability and constructive outlook were fully appreciated. He was the first Indian in the I.C.S. to become Commissioner of a Division, consisting of a number of districts. Some short-sighted English administrators were jealous and criticised the appointment but, by and large, all Europeans associated with him, whether as superiors or subordinates acknowledged his eminence and fitness. In 1895, he was Commissioner of Orissa and also political Agent of Indian States. He proved his capacity by rising equal to the delicate tasks involved in this position.

As soon as he had completed the necessary minimum of service when he could retire and earn full pension, he resigned from the Indian Civil Service. Perhaps he would have risen higher and become even the first Indian Secretary to Government in some department, had he continued in service for the nine years that were still lawfully left to him. But larger public service proved an irresistible attraction to him. Even while in service he carried on his literary work in Bengali and English. This became possible because he managed to ration his time and he was an industrious and disciplined person. He believed that literature was a powerful weapon for revivifying the national mind of India and restoring to her sons their lost faith in the past."

With this end in view he published in 1877 a history of the literature in Bengali from 12th century, to his day. This also bears a likeness to what Ranade did in regard to the history of the Mahrattas and the literature in Marathi language. Like Rabindranath Tagore, Romesh Chunder Dutt also came under the influence of Bankim Chandra Chattarjea and his romantic-cum-historic works in Bengali. As a result, he published four historical novels in Bengali.

In later years he wrote two social novels also in which he portrayed faithfully and critically contemporary rural life in Bengal. Some of these novels have been rendered in sister languages of India and in English.

Dutt's interest was not confined only to light literature. He published a complete translation of the *Rig Veda* in Bengali and it was highly spoken of by Indian and European scholars. Bankim Chandra Chattarjea who was himself a Sanskrit Scholar was all appreciation for it. In 1889 he published his famous work, *The history of Civilisation in Ancient India*. About this work Grierson said, "It is a work which we have all been wanting for years. It is just the thorough and delightful book which we would expect from Romesh Chunder Dutt."

The work comprised three volumes and was a great attempt to give a clear and connected estimate of the origin, growth and several aspects of Hindu life, religion and philosophy, in the English language. *India in the Victorian Age* is also an important work of his in English.

After he had retired from service, the University of London recognised his services to the study of Indian history by offering him a lectureship in Indian history. He accepted the offer and lived for seven years in London in that connection. All his spare time was devoted to literary work in London. His *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in condensed form in the English language were published in those days.

*The Economic History of India* in two volumes, the first of which was published in 1901 treats of India under early British rule and the second volume published in 1903 treats of the Victorian period. Dutt has explained his object in writing these volumes in the following words :

"Excellent works in the military and political transactions of the British in India have been written by eminent historians. No history of the people of India, of their trade, industries and agriculture and of their economic condition under British administration has yet been compiled. Recent famines in India have attracted attention to this very important subject and there is a general and widespread desire to understand the condition of the Indian people, the sources of their wealth and the courses of their poverty."

Romesh Chunder's intention was not to be unduly hard on British rule but he could not turn a blind eye to the real effects of it

on the Indian people. He gratefully acknowledged the benefits of peace and good government that British rule had bestowed on the Indian people. He also acknowledged that study of English history and literature led to the rise of Indian nationalism for the first time, in the modern sense, but he did not hesitate to point out the errors which had crept into the administration and which called for rectification.

This was the keynote of his patriotic work as an administrator, publicist, teacher and author. His services were recognised by the political readers of those days and he was elected President of the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in 1898.

In his presidential address he hit on the right nail when he said, "Our difficulty and our danger lie in this that great administrative questions are discussed and settled in Executive Councils where we are not represented and not heard. I do not say that the official view is necessarily wrong and that our view is necessarily right, but I do say that both views should be fairly represented before the tribunal which shapes our destinies." Land Revenue Assessment in India in his opinion was excessive and the cause of the poverty of the masses.

He said, "It is not over-population nor the natural improvidence of the cultivators. It is that except in Bengal and a few other tracts, the land assessment is so heavy that the cultivator is not able to save in good years enough to meet the failure of harvests in bad years."

In his open letters to Lord Curzon, he touched upon this topic again in 1900. Five clear and distinct recommendations were made by him : (1) That the revenue payable by landlords should be limited to half the actual rental. (2) That settlements should be made for 30 years in all provinces. (3) The local cesses should be limited. (4) That the revenue payable by cultivators should not be enhanced except on definite grounds and (5) That revenue should never exceed half the net produce or the gross produce. Some of these recommendations were accepted by Government.

Although Romesh Chunder was chiefly interested in literary work and economic well-being of the peasantry, he took interest even in social reform and industrial advancement of the country. He participated in the Social Conference and Industrial Conference Sessions. He was an ardent advocate of *Swadeshi* and women's education. His ideas in these matters were the same as those of

Ranade. In a passage from his speech at the National Indian Association in London in 1901 on social progress in India he remarked, "It is not desirable and it is not possible to Europeanise Indian life. The people of India are able to judge for themselves what is best for themselves and Indian life and Hindu life has always proved itself capable of assimilating what is good for itself. It is because we have been able to assimilate all needful reforms from generation to generation and from age to age, that our ancient Hindu life exists in India when so many phases of ancient life have passed away in other countries like Persia, Egypt and Babylon."

The most progressive ruler of Baroda State in his day, Sayajirao Gaekwad had for long noted the administrative and other abilities of Romesh Chunder and so while he was in England doing useful work by enlightening English audiences on Indian subjects and making them understand that the whole of the educated people of India were united by one common aim, striving for one common object, demanding that priceless boon of self-Government, which no civilised Government could for ever deny to a civilised nation, he invited Romesh Chunder to be his Revenue Minister to begin with and then made him his Prime Minister.

Baroda prospered continuously under him. One of the principal reforms introduced by him was the separation of judicial and executive functions. Under his advice a Council of Ministers was constituted. Many oppressive taxes and customs duties were abolished, the system of revenue assessment was improved, local self-governing bodies were established and increased, free and compulsory primary education was extended to the whole state and measures were taken to promote cottage and factory industries.

In 1907, Dutt was appointed member of the Commission on Decentralisation by the British Government. He spent about a year in England in that connection but continued to be Dewan of Baroda all the while. His accomplishments were versatile and solid and what his countrymen thought about him could be summed up, perhaps, by what the Ruler of Baroda said about him after he died during Lord Minto's visit to Baroda.

The Maharaja said, "His mental grasp, the power of will and the hall-mark of industry gave Romesh Dutt the unmistakable character of a man fashioned in a large mould. There was nothing small about him. Among any company of men in any part of the world, he would have stood high."

## BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

AMONG the many great figures of the British period of Indian history there is none more impressive or distinctive than Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the only Lokmanya of India. In the course of his career of 64 years this versatile man achieved not only India-wide but also world-wide fame as a patriot, a politician, an educationist, a scholar and a philosopher which no other personality equalled or excelled.

As Dr. R. P. Paranjpye who belonged to a different and often even an opposite political camp said in a Tilak anniversary broadcast, "Tilak was well called the uncrowned king of Maharashtra during the last 20 years of his life. The British Government regarded him as Enemy No. 1 but the great mass of people of Maharashtra and in fact the whole of India regarded him with an admiration and devotion unexampled in Indian history before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi."

Lokmanya Tilak as his countrymen lovingly call him was born on July 23, 1856 in the sleepy, little coastal town Ratnagiri where his father was serving as a school master in a primary school. He inherited from his mother not a particularly strong physique, but had a really extraordinary intellect which developed beyond the expectations of all his near and dear in the agreeable atmosphere of Poona, known as a seat of learning, where his father was promoted to a higher post in the Education Department when Tilak was only ten years of age.

Since then Poona became his home town till his death in 1920, which took place in Bombay. As a boy he was precocious and so premature in his intellectual attainments. He was particularly proficient in Sanskrit and Mathematics and these were the subjects that he taught in Fergusson College as a Professor in his young days. At the age of ten Tilak acquired a nodding acquaintance with work of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti, Dandi and Bharavi. His father, however, imagined that Bana was beyond him because this Sanskrit poet is the despair of even advanced students of Sanskrit on account of

the very lengthy combinations of words he employs in his *Kadambari* and *Harshacharita*.

One day when his father, Gangadhar Sashtri was engrossed in unravelling the word combinations of *Kadambari*, Tilak happened to be playing about. He demanded that the book, father was reading should be given to him. Father considered the demand extraordinary but not wanting to discourage him and yet intent on putting him off, said that he could get it on the condition of solving a sum in Arithmetic. A fairly difficult sum was set to him. Tilak did find it difficult but did not grumble. For two hours he struggled with it and ultimately solved it. Exhilarated by his success he made a triumphant demand of *Kadambari* and Tilak senior had to surrender it to Tilak junior !

This incident is symbolic of Tilak's whole career. He brought to bear on every situation in his life the same intellectual powers, courage, resolution, absorption and devotion. He counted no sacrifice too great for a cause that he espoused and the sufferings he put up with during his three imprisonments were his singular distinction, no other patriot in the lawful and constitutional movement for *Swaraj* having been required to go through similar tribulation.

After a first class University career, with a degree in Mathematics and another in Law to his credit, Tilak settled down in Poona as an educationist. His other colleagues were Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Vaman Shivram Apte. Gopal Krishna Gokhale joined them soon afterwards. The New English School which they started and the Deccan Education Society into which it grew became the cynosure of all discerning eyes. Fergusson College of the Society became a showpiece of the whole country because it was a living illustration of the idea that Indians could come together for pursuing a secular purpose in a spirit of cooperation and of the ideal that they could help themselves trusting Heaven to help them.

Tilak, however, resigned from this Society after serving it for ten years as a life-member and took charge of the Society's two weekly newspapers the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta*, respectively published in Marathi and English. As proprietor-editor he made them a great power for popular education and awakening. He became a national teacher instead of a school-master. Henceforth his life was dedicated to the task of building up the power of the people to resist

the many wrongs from which they were suffering at the hands of a foreign bureaucracy.

Tilak's very first public service brought him into sharp conflict with Government. It is known as the Crawford affairs. Crawford was an I. C. S. officer who practised graft, corruption and bribery on a large scale. Mamlatdars who were invariably Indians were his willing or unwilling tools in this nefarious business. Lord Reay, the then Governor of Bombay decided to appoint a Commission of inquiry into his doings. Tilak, Ranade and Gokhale publicly supported this action. The Mamlatdars who had played into Crawford's hands were invited to come out with whatever information they had with them on the understanding that they would be treated as approvers.

The Commission of inquiry, however, found the Mamlatdars guilty and prescribed varying punishments to several of them because the Commission felt that the law had to take its course. The pledge given to the Mamlatdars was thus broken and Tilak and others raised their voice against the steps taken against the Mamlatdars. Tilak was the leader of this movement and covered all the stages of Lawful and constitutional agitation including submitting memorials, holding protest meetings, writing in the press and taking the question right up to Parliament. As a result, justice was substantially secured for the Mamlatdars who later publicly honoured him by presenting him a silver watch.

Soon after this event Tilak was out of the Deccan Education Society and devoted his attention to build up his journals, the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta*. They hardly ever paid their way for the first many years and Tilak had to maintain himself by running a Law Class. He contested the Central Division seat to the Bombay Legislative Council and was elected with a large majority. After two years he again contested the same seat and was re-elected but before he could take his seat, the first sedition case was launched against him. He resigned his seat and never again tried to enter into any Legislative body of the land.

As a journalist, he was required to take up popular grievances and demands from week to week. Automatically he became a champion of neglected causes and a tribune of the people. During his tenure of the membership of the Council as a prominent member of the Sarvajanic Sabha he pleaded for relief to the famine-

stricken districts, organised the people therefrom to demand suspension and remission of land revenue assessment and insisted that Government must give necessary relief to afflicted people and not insist on its pound of flesh by demanding the land revenue.

The agitation necessarily developed into refusal by the people of the land tax. Tilak's colleagues like S.M. Paranjpye, A.S. Sathe, N.C. Kelkar, V. K. Rajwade, K. P. Khadilkar and others toured the famine and scarcity districts and exhorted the people not to pay, because they were unable to pay. Prosecution of some of these propagandists could not be sustained in courts and Government had to grant suspensions and remissions. Tilak came to be recognised as its organiser and a leader who wielded great influence over the people.

Side by side with this movement, there was another movement for the relief of the people who were suffering from the terrible scourge, called bubonic plague. For years this epidemic made its yearly appearance and led to great misery and hardship. One Captain Rand was appointed Plague Officer in Poona and the measures he enforced for the relief the people only led to increased misery and they preferred to die of plague rather than of his relief measures. He spurned the preferred cooperation of popular leaders even in such humanitarian work and became very unpopular.

Tilak in his papers severely criticised his methods and established a private hospital with the help of his friends in the medical profession. People preferred to pay for treatment in this hospital rather than benefit by the free treatment in the Government hospital because the treatment given there was unsympathetic and lacked human touch. This led to increasing popular discontent and it found expression in one hot-head shooting Rand to death while he was returning from a party at Poona Government House. Tilak condemned the murder but pointed out that it was a consequence of acute popular discontent.

Tilak also set afoot two other movements viz., the Ganesh Festival and the Shivaji Festival. Thus while fighting for the social and economic ills the people were suffering from, he also made efforts to rouse their self-respect by appealing to their sense of cultural and historic greatness and creating the consciousness that because their past was glorious they had a right to an equally glorious future by working with prudence in the present. These movements had created a spirit of resistance among the people and



by universal agreement Tilak was regarded as the one person, more than any other, who had generated it.

The murder of Rand was sufficient provocation for the Government to pounce upon Tilak as the arch-inspirer of a defiant spirit in people of Maharashtra. But it was not easy to connect him with it. For, however vigorous and militant were Tilak's speeches, writings and activities, he was not an advocate of murders or dacoities even in the name of politics or freedom. But Government was bent on doing something to demonstrate its wrath and so on some flimsy pretext and by twisting and turning the sections of the Indian Penal Code, Tilak was found guilty of sedition and sent to jail.

When he was released from jail after a year, because his health was considerably undermined and also because men like Max Muller and Romesh Chunder Dutt had made a demand for his release on humanitarian grounds, he went on a tour of South India for change of climate and when he was well again, he resumed his public and political work. Lord Curzon was then Viceroy of India and his partition of Bengal had led to much dissatisfaction and discontent among the Bengalees. They demanded its withdrawal. Government was adamant. The *Swadeshi* and boycott movements began in Bengal and Tilak and with him the whole of Maharashtra stood behind Bengal. The terrorist movement raised its head. Political murders and political dacoities became the order of the day, Punjab, Bengal and Maharashtra being the nerve-centres of the movement.

Tilak was not an active supporter or even a silent sympathiser of the terrorist activity, but he did not hesitate to say that the cult of the bomb was a necessary consequence of Government's policy of not satisfying people's legitimate aspirations and not redressing their grievances. Discontent went on accumulating and there was what came to be known 'unrest in India.' A stern repressive policy was adopted by Government and many young men belonging to the terrorist cult lost their lives or suffered long terms of imprisonment. Their inhuman treatment in jails was a chapter by itself.

There grew two wings even among the constitutional agitators, a militant wing and a moderate wing. Roughly speaking, Tilak represented the former and Gokhale the latter. The discontent in the Deccan was traced mainly to the activities of Tilak and once again he was prosecuted for sedition on the strength of some of his

writings in the *Kesari* and sentenced to six years rigorous imprisonment. Once his conviction was secured, the Governor of the Province, Sir George Clarke commuted it to simple imprisonment. Tilak was sent to Mandalay but was treated well. It was there that he wrote his *magnum opus*, the *Geetarahasya* in Marathi, his own mother tongue.

This was not the only scholarly book on Hindu religion, philosophy and ethics that Tilak wrote in his stormy career. *Orion* and *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, two other works, full of scholarly research, were written by him in English between 1896 and 1905. They made him known as an Indologist and Orientalist of international repute. Even if the political achievements of Tilak are forgotten by future generations his scholarly achievements have immortalised him in the world of learning.

Soon after Tilak was released from Mandalay, the first world war broke out. Tilak made a declaration of loyalty to the British empire. His claim was that he was never disloyal even though he was convicted of sedition twice before. But his loyalty was not a unilateral affair. He wanted political autonomy for India like the self-governing dominions, and an equal status with them. On that basis he volunteered to lead even a recruiting campaign but even there he demanded commissioned ranks in the Army for educated Indians. He started the Home Rule League and under its auspices carried on incessant and vigorous propaganda even though he was now clearly aging. When he completed sixty years in July 1916, his followers celebrated the event with great eclat and presented him a purse of one lakh of rupees. Such an event was then unprecedented in the public life of India.

All this was too much for the Government. Once again an attempt was made to gag him. He was prosecuted for sedition for the third time alleging that two or three of his speeches were highly objectionable. He was convicted in the lower Court in Poona, but the High Court of Bombay acquitted him and the Home Rule movement became a respectable and a lawful activity, beyond all doubt. Perhaps as a partial and tacit recognition of this fact came the announcement by Mr. E. S. Montagu, then Secretary of State for India that "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and the

gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realization of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

As a consequence came the Government of India Act 1919 whereby partial provincial autonomy, then called dyarchy, full local self-Government and increased popular elective element in the Central Legislature were established. Tilak called this only one-anna home rule while he had constantly declared that full home rule was every Indian's birthright and he must have it. Yet, he refused to be disappointed and was busy making preparations for capturing as many seats as possible in the new legislatures which might demand scrapping of the 1919 Act and conferment of more political rights like full provincial autonomy and a substantial share of power at the Centre.

Tilak was 63 at this stage and was keeping very indifferent health. A brisk drive in a car through the city of Bombay in Company of Dewan Chamanlal was the immediate cause of an attack of influenza. No efforts of best medical men could save him and he died on August 1, 1920 while he was in the midst of his talks with Gandhiji in favour of launching a non-cooperation campaign for righting the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs. Gandhiji exclaimed on getting the news "my greatest bulwark is gone." Following is the tribute that Gandhiji paid him in his Young India.

"Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak is no more. It is difficult to believe of him as dead. He was so much part of the people. No man of our times had the hold on the masses that he had. The devotion that he commanded from thousands of his countrymen was extraordinary. He was unquestionably the idol of his people. His word was law among thousands.

"A giant among men has fallen. The voice of a lion is hushed. What was the reason of his hold upon his countrymen? I think the answer is simple. His patriotism was a passion with him. He knew no religion but love of his country. He was a born democrat. He believed in the rule of majority with an intensity that fairly frightened me. But that gave him his hold. He had an iron will which he used for his country. His life was an open book. His tastes were simple. His private life was spotlessly clean. He had dedicated his wonderful talents to his country. No man preached the gos-

pel of Swaraj with the consistence and the insistence of the Lokmanya. His countrymen, therefore, implicitly believed in him. His courage never failed him. *His optimism was irrepressible.* The Lokmanya had hoped to see Swaraj fully established during his life-time. If he failed, that was not his fault. He certainly brought it nearer by many a year. It is for us who remain behind to put forth redoubled effort to make it a reality in the shortest possible time. For us, he will go to the generations yet unborn as a maker of modern India. They will revere his memory as of a man who lived for them and died for them."

## G. SUBRAMANYA IYER

THE name of Ganapati Subramanya Iyer is still remembered in South India as one who contributed more than any of his contemporaries to the building up of public life in that part of the country. In the political history of the Madras State, his name will always occupy a high and honoured place. Journals played an important part in building up the public life in his day and as founder of the *Hindu* and the *Swadesamitran*, it was only right that he came to be looked upon as the father of public life in southern India.

Like so many of the patriots and publicists of the early days of the nationalist movement for political freedom in India ; Ganapati Subramanya Iyer was originally a teacher by profession. Born in January 1855 at Tiruvadi in Tanjore district on the banks of the Cauvery, he was the fourth son of Ganapati Dikshitar, a Brahmin legal practitioner in the local Munsiff's court. Subramanya was educated in local schools and St. Peter's College at Tanjore. He underwent training as a teacher at the Normal School Madras after he had passed the First Arts examination in 1873. In 1875, he was employed as a teacher in the Church of Scotland Mission School on a salary of Rs. 40 a month. Two years later he joined the Pachayappa's High School Madras.

It was about this time that he formed the friendship of Veeraghavachariar who later collaborated with him in the work of the *Hindu*. In 1879, Subramanya Iyer was appointed Headmaster of the Anglo-Vernacular School of Triplicane, Madras and as such enjoyed what may be called a higher social status.

The work of a mere Headmaster was too limited for his talents and he began to think in terms of becoming a teacher of his people at large. He conceived the idea of starting an English weekly newspaper and with the co-operation of Veeraghavachariar and others, the *Hindu* was launched. The journal received a good response and in a short while it began to be published thrice a week. Ultimately it became a daily and got a foot-hold not only in the Telugu, Tamil and Malyalam districts of the Madras Presidency, but also in Mysore and Hyderabad States of those days.

For 20 consecutive years, G. Subramanya Iyer occupied the editorial chair of the *Hindu*. He severed his connection with it about the time he went to England to appear before the Welby Commission as a witness. That was in 1898. The *Hindu* had become a power in the land by this time. It was acknowledged on all hands that it distinguished itself by rare ability, intrepidity of a high order and an unparalled sense of public duty. It was one of the foremost, if not the foremost, organ of Indian public opinion in English when Subramanya Iyer laid down his editorial mantle. Such was the prestige it had attained that whenever he had to ascertain reliable public opinion on any important measure, Lord Ripon the Viceroy of India in those days used to say, "Take the *Hindu* and see what it says."

After severing his connection with the *Hindu*, Subramanya Iyer started a new English weekly called *United India* and conducted it for some time with his accustomed ability, but he made it over in order to concentrate his attention on a Tamil organ of his own, because he felt that popular education on a large scale could only be more effectively done in the language of the people themselves.

He fulfilled his desire by starting the *Swadesamitran* first as weekly, but it was soon converted into a daily. Needless to say that it became even a more roaring success than the *Hindu* and led to much greater political awakening among the masses of the Madras Presidency. Iyer lived long enough to see the silver jubilee of the *Swadesamitran*. On that occasion he was stormed with numerous marks of public appreciation and esteem from his constituents and leaders of public opinion. Both the *Hindu* and *Swadesamitran* are doing the same service to this day in Free India.

Subramanya Iyer was prominently associated with the Indian National Congress from the very begining. His distinction perhaps lies in the fact that he was accorded the honour of moving the first resolution of the first session in Bombay in 1885. Since then he regularly attended all sessions. Iyer spoke in English in the Congress sessions, but otherwise he preferred to address public meetings in his native Tamil. He was at home in both languages and spoke both with equal effortlessness. He was not an orator like Surendranath Banerjea or Lal Mohan Ghose or Pherozezshah Mehta, but he was a vigorous and effective speaker. His services to the country were recognised in his own province when he was invited to preside over

the Provincial Conference in 1902 at Coconada. In his address he laid stress on the point of economic exploitation of the country by the British. He presided over several district political conferences also and thus took a large share in educating public opinion by taking up grievances on economic and land revenue matters. For this purpose, he used the Tamil medium more effectively.

One of the much remembered services that Subramanya Iyer rendered to the country at the end of the last century in the days of our regenerate nationalism was his evidence before the Indian Expenditure Commission presided over by Lord Welby of which Dadabhai Naoroji and Sir William Wedderburn were distinguished members.

Among the witnesses were such men as Dinshaw Wacha, Surendranath Banerjea, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and others. Madras was represented by Subramanya Iyer. Gokhale's evidence was considered by common consent as the most weighty and assertive evidence but Subramanya Iyer and others greatly strengthened his position by what they said. Iyer's grasp of public questions which he displayed with robust confidence was then much admired. He was in full agreement with Gokhale and Dadabhai. The latter came down from his seat on the Commission to give his evidence, as a common citizen of India at the time.

Even while Subramanya Iyer and Veeraraghavachariar were conducting the *Hindu*, the former chiefly as editor and the latter chiefly as manager, the difference in their outlook became obvious. Subramanya was as much for social and economic reform as for political reform, while Veeraraghavachariar mainly stood for political reform. The latter was in good company inasmuch as such men as Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjea, Romesh Chunder Dutt and Bal Gangadhar Tilak were also of the view that political reform should have precedence before all other reforms because they would follow political reform as a matter of course, just as the thread follows the needle.

Most of the social reformers who were Subramanya Iyer's contemporaries were only preachers. Practice in their case did not necessarily follow preaching. But Subramanya Iyer was made of a different stuff. He was a practical social reformer. He got his widowed daughter re-married and this act on his part entailed social ostracism on him for some time. But his sincerity and public

spirit became quite manifest and respect for him grew not only in his province but all over India.

A story that is not very consequential but relates to a little conflict with Tilak might be told more by way of amusement. It was customary for the Social Reform Conference to be held in the pandal of the Indian National Congress since both were held in the same city and had many a common delegate since 1885. In 1895, the session of the Congress was held in Poona and as usual, the social reformers planned to hold the Social Reform Conference in the Congress pandal. But many Congressmen were opposed to this and they had already become Congress delegates. In reference to their wishes and because the President-elect, Surendranath Banerjea took the same view, the Social Reform Conference was held in a separate place by Ranade and others.

The incident between Tilak and Subramanya was an off-shoot of this controversy. The Social Reform Party in Poona had called a meeting of the Poona public in a private house with a view to packing it with their own men and electing them as delegates of their own party. Tilak and his henchmen reached the venue of the meeting even before the conveners arrived and occupied all the seats. When Gokhale and his friends came, they found that they did not have even seating accommodation. Some one who called himself a correspondent of the *Hindu* telegraphed to Madras to say that Tilak had taken the aid of the students of his Law Class for packing the meeting and thus deliberately crowded out even the conveners and got his own men elected as delegates to the Congress.

When this was published, Tilak served a notice on the *Hindu* claiming damages for defamation or an apology. The telegram published in the *Hindu* had for its bold type heading. 'Disgraceful Squabble in Poona.' The notice was not meant to be really seriously pursued and Subramanya Iyer and Tilak decided to do nothing about it, but Tilak only wanted Iyer to understand that the Social Reform Party men were by no means angels.

Having been closely connected with the Congress from the very beginning and having watched its career for 20 consecutive years, Subramanya Iyer began to despair of any success by following the traditional methods of prayers and petitions. Like Bipin Chandra Pal, he also began to describe that time-honoured policy as mendicant policy. He became restless and was intent on devising some vigorous,



militant, more self-respecting and self-assertive way of carrying on agitation for political reforms which he, like his compatriots wanted to culminate in complete political freedom.

When, therefore, the Swadeshi movement began to assume an aggressive form by being described as boycott of British goods, he at once fell in line with the 'extremist' wing represented by Tilak, Pal, Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo Ghose. In spite of extreme ill health, he undertook lecturing tours all over India and in his own Madras province, he preached the gospel of Swadeshi and Boycott to his countrymen in Tamil.

In the campaign for repression that followed the Muzzafarpur Bomb Case in Bengal, Government did not take long to notice that Ganapati Subramanya Iyer was the most outspoken and vigorous public man in South India who helped to keep on agitation simmering in Madras. A charge of sedition was framed against him in 1909 after Tilak was safely lodged in Mandalay. It was a flimsy case, based on inaccurate and misleading police reports and Government's own legal advisers counselled that a prosecution for sedition against him would fail ignominiously and Government would be made the laughing-stock of the whole country. The case was, therefore, withdrawn with some kind of a mild warning to Subramanya Iyer.

As a pioneering Nationalist journalist who worked for his country's cause of freedom in a missionary spirit, as a social reformer who believed more in example than precept, as an economist who wanted complete fiscal freedom, Indianisation of all services including the military services and protection for indigenous industries, Subramanya Iyer rendered yeoman's services to people in South India both in the press and on the platform. So long as the *Hindu* and the *Swadeshamitran* live and continue to render the great public services they have been devotedly rendering to this day since their coming into being, Subramanya Iyer's name as their founder and promoter will never be forgotten by his grateful countrymen.

In his lectures delivered under the auspices of the Andhra University in 1935 on "Indian Politics since the Mutiny," the late Mr. C.Y. Chintami referred to Ganapati Subramanya Iyer as the principal public worker in Madras making the following observations which speak for themselves:

“He did for Madras, principally through the columns of the *Hindu* but also through the Congress and the Mahajana Sabha what men like Surendranath Banerjea and Motilal Ghose did for Bengal and Wacha, Tilak and Gokhale for Bombay. He was the greatest journalist of his generation and the greatest admirer of his writings was Mr. A. O. Hume, the founder of the Congress. Mr. Hume wrote to Mr. Subramanya Iyer that his articles would do credit even to the *Times* of London and he selected the *Hindu* of which he purchased 50 copies, as the best medium for instruction of sympathetic members of Parliament. Pherozeshah Mehta and Dinshaw Wacha equally admired him while Mr. Gokhale told me one day that there was no other editor in India who had the same masterly grip of public questions as Mr. Subramanya Iyer. He was not elected but deserved to be elected President of the Congress. He wrote a very useful book entitled *Some Economic Aspects of British Rule in India*.”

## MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

A LOYAL Congressman all his life. This would perhaps sum up the career of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, if one were to epitomise it in a single phrase. He refused to leave the Congress whether it was dominated by the Moderates, the Militants or the followers of Gandhi, not caring whether his view was acceptable to the Congress or not. He had an intense loyalty towards that institution which he had cherished from his youth upwards. It never faltered or flagged. He was born on December 25, 1861 and died in November 1946. He was elected four times President of the Congress: 1) Lahore-1909, 2) Delhi-1918, 3) Delhi 1932, 4) Calcutta-1933.

Malaviya's misfortune, however, was that more often than not he was in disagreement with majority decisions. Yet, whenever he stood up to raise his voice against such decisions he was heard with utmost respect, and his devotion to the country and the Congress was never questioned by a single delegate. Till the militant wing came into existence in the wake of partition of Bengal in 1905, all Congressmen were, more or less, of one mind. But with the partition of Bengal and the emergence of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bepin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose, Lala Lajpat Rai and others as the leaders of the militant wing, somewhat contemptuously referred to as Extremists in those days, there arose a distinct party of those who questioned the *bona fides* of the British rulers and proclaimed self-reliance as the way of further political progress. Malaviya sympathised with this party but preferred to remain with the old guard represented by Pherozeshah Metha, Surenderanath Banerjea and others. These were as contemptuously referred to as "Moderates" by the 'Extremists'.

After the split at Surat, not only Malaviya but even Lala Lajpat Rai remained in the Congress and when after Tilak's return from Mandalay Jail, the militants returned to the Congress, they welcomed them back. Under Gandhi ji's leadership, the non-co-operation movement began and though Malaviya wholly agreed with Gandhiji in regard to the grievousness of the Punjab wrong, he did not approve of the boycott of Councils in the least. He strongly raised his voice

against it and continued to work from his seat in the Supreme Council and the Legislative Assembly. When the Swaraj Party was formed by Motilal Nehru who led it in the Assembly, he was supremely happy, but did not approve of the 'wrecking' programme and led his own party in Assembly called the Nationalist Party, though on most questions there was complete cooperation between the two.

The fact of the matter is that with all his loyalty and devotion to the Congress which he looked upon as the Parliament of India and therefore wanted all schools of politics to be represented in it, he was an orthodox Hindu. It may be truly said that there was no conservative Hindu of his type among all the English-educated patriots of India ever since the British rule began in India. He supported Gandhiji and the Congress in standing by Muslims of India who were anxious to retain the Kaliphate and therefore supported the Khilaphat movement but he had his misgivings about it and when he saw that the non-co-operation campaign was succeeded by the terrible Moplah rising in the South, wherein many Hindus were brutally circumcised and converted forcibly to Islam, it was impossible for him as an ardent Hindu to support the Khilaphat movement. His mental conflict became quite acute and he did not know where he really stood in 1921 and 1922. The Hindu Mahasabha movement was promoted by him and Laipat Rai as a consequence.

Yet, in a sudden emergency, when the call of the country came to him with compelling force, he could rise above his orthodoxy. Such a step was taken by him when he decided to cross the seas and to go to London in order to attend the Second Round Table Conference. Gandhiji would take no other older Congressman with him but Malaviya and he yielded to the pressure of the 'younger brother', taking the trouble of cooking his own food and providing himself with sufficient supply of the water of the Ganga and eating only fruits and roots. Of course he underwent the necessary Prayaschitta i.e. purificatory rite after his return, but it meant a great deal that in his old age, while he had lived all the while in a certain secluded atmosphere he suddenly changed the whole character of his daily life in such a novel way.

Even while calling himself an orthodox Hindu, he never considered it to be a reproach. It is necessary to point out that he never supported untouchability. He considered it a disgrace to Hinduism as much as Gandhiji did. He always asserted that the old Hindu

Shastras had found no place for them. He quoted passage after passage to show that men of the lowest castes, on account of their purity of character and nobility of life, had been preceptors of members of the highest castes and taught them religious truths. How could such men be regarded as polluted and untouchable or unapproachable by those whom they taught? It may be mentioned that he treated the late Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as his own son.

Similarly, although he believed that child marriage was perfectly in conformity with Hindu religious injunctions and that an alien Government could not make it unlawful, in as much that was tantamount to religious interference and therefore opposed such moves with vehemence, he had come round to the view that children should not be married. He had the marriage age raised in his own family in the case of boys as well as girls.

Malaviya joined the Congress in its second session in 1886 and remained in it till his death. During this long period there was not one session that he did not attend. He was always in demand to speak on one or more resolutions. But he never sacrificed his opinions and always courageously stood by his convictions. The last such occasion was provided by the Communal Award, given by J. Ramsay Macdonald in his capacity as the President of the Round Table Conference. While the Congress took, by majority vote, the attitude of neither accepting nor rejecting it, Malaviya, supported by Aney totally condemned it as injurious to the interests of the Hindus. Malaviya was never for breaking law or civil disobedience, but even his patience was exhausted. His conscience was touched and in the end he courted imprisonment with fellow-Indians more than once. He moved with the times, once conviction came to him. His courage or sincerity was never in question.

Pandit Malaviya was an unswerving supporter of the Swadeshi movement, though in keeping with his moderation he did not approve of the slogan 'boycott' and the mentality behind it. A young lawyer in Allahabad, as far back as 1881, Pandit Malaviya set afoot a company to promote the use of indigenous manufactures. Since then he consistently advocated the use of every thing Swadeshi even at a sacrifice. He wanted his countrymen to put up with even coarser and dearer Swadeshi products in preference to foreign ones because he said that policy would ultimately make for the prosperity of the country. Without ever swearing by boycott, he always regarded it as part of his duty to purchase indigenous goods, because he

considered that such a practice on the part of his countrymen would take some morsels of food to the cottages of artisans and workers and weavers, who but for this might go hungry and starve.

He also believed that factories of the western type have to come into existence to remove unemployment and skilled workers. Therefore, he helped to bring into existence the Indian Industrial Conference and the United Provinces Industrial Association at Allahabad in 1907 and took lively interest in the deliberations of those bodies. He had also a large share in setting afoot the Prayag Sugar Company. When the Hollad Commission was appointed, Pandit Malaviya was taken as one of the members. In that connection he toured over the whole country and studied the economic and industrial problems of several areas with great diligence. He brought to bear his independent mind over the material collected by the Commission from the witnesses and was ultimately led to write his own minute of dissent in which he strongly advocated a protective tariff policy and state aid of other kinds and training of technical personnel.

Among the great services that Pandit Malaviya rendered to his country, his contributions to the proceedings of the Legislative Council and the Central Legislative Assembly will for ever be remembered. He took great care to prepare his speeches and he delivered them with an eloquence which was quite remarkable, though the language he used for the speeches had to be not his mother tongue, but English. As Sarojini Naidu once said about his eloquence, his English was silver but his Hindi was golden. He had a kind of reverence for the procedure of Parliament which many of his contemporaries, except perhaps Gokhale, did not share, but he was a great admirer of British institutions and British liberalism of which in his view Gladstone was the most brilliant representative.

In the Hindu University at Banaras, Pandit Malaviya has left his greatest memorial behind him. He worked on this scheme for a number of years and enlisted the support of high officials, princes and the commoners with the same respect for his personality. He was complimented by Gandhiji by calling him the most successful beggar because in those days he collected a fund of a crore of rupees to get that institution going. He wanted to make it a centre of Oriental and Occidental learning with a Hindu bias for ever maintained in its working. He was particular about the old Sanskrit learning being preserved intact, though he also wanted technical, engineering and

commerce colleges to be run under its auspices side by side. To begin with, the Central Hindu college which Mrs. Besant had started there early in this century was affiliated and during the course of a few years, all the dreams of Malaviya were realised during his life time within the campus of the University which extends over an area of about four square miles. For many years he was its Vice-Chancellor and guided its destinies exactly after his heart and when he retired he was succeeded by so eminent an exponent of Hindu philosophy and way of life as Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India since India became a free Sovereign Country and now President of India.

As a private citizen, Pandit Malaviya was known to be a most charitably minded person. There may not be behind him any great benefactions but like the ancient Hindu householder, he never sent an applicant away who went to ask his help. There are numerous acts of kindness to the needy which he performed and which really reveal a human being's secret spring of action. He was always deeply interested in social and philanthropic work and was never more happy than when he was engaged in relieving some human misery.

When plague first broke out in Allahabad, Malaviya was Vice-Chairman of the local Municipal Board. The then Collector, who was a popular officer, asked Malaviya's help in taking steps to prevent the spread of the disease. Malaviya's response was full and immediate. For over two weeks, he personally supervised the disinfection work in a lane where plague was reported to have first broken out and where deaths had occurred in almost every house. Malaviya worked like a common volunteer out of his fund of human sympathy and fellow-feeling. His example proved infectious and all members of the Municipal Board followed suit.

He also initiated a health camp where about 200 families found absolute security from that deathly 'courage. Malaviya used to attend this camp every morning and evening and attend the Plague Hospital in the same way to give encouragement to his frightened people. This work of Malaviyaji is reminiscent of another Conservative Hindu leader, though he was not so conservative as Malaviya viz. Lokamanya Tilak in connection with the Famine and Plague calamities in Maharashtra, during the probationary period so to speak, of his great leadership of the whole country. Indeed it is since then that he came to be styled Lokamanya.

## LALA LAJPAT RAI

MAHATMA Gandhi neatly summed up the life and achievements of Lala Lajpat Rai in the obituary he wrote in Young India. He said, "Men like the Lala cannot die so long as the Sun shines in the Indian sky. Lalaji means an institution. From his youth, he made, of his country's service, his religion. His patriotism was no narrow creed. He loved his country because he loved the world. His nationalism was internationalism. Hence his hold on the European mind. He claimed a large circle of friends in Europe and America. They loved him because they knew him. His activities were multifarious. He was ardent social and religious reformer. Like many of us, he became a politician because, his zeal for social and religious reform demanded participation in politics. He observed at an early stage of his public career that much reform of the type he wanted was not possible until the country was freed from foreign domination. It appeared to him, as to most of us, as a poison corrupting every department of life. It is impossible to think of a single public movement in which Lalaji was not to be found. His love of service was insatiable. He founded educational institutions. He befriended the suppressed classes. Poverty, wherever found, claimed his attention. No young man appealed to him in vain for help. In the political field he was indispensable. He was fearless in the expression of his views. He suffered for it when suffering had not become customary or fashionable. His life was an open book. His extreme frankness embarrassed his friends; it also confounded his critics. But he was incorrigible."

Yet such a man was suspected as an anti-British trouble-maker and mischief-monger by a Lt. Governor of the Punjab, called Sir Denzil Ibbetson, in 1907. He wrote to Lord Morley, then Secretary of State for India, "Some of the leaders look to driving the British out of the country or at any rate from power-either by force or passive resistance of the people as a whole; and the method by which they have set themselves to bring the Government machine to a standstill is by endeavouring to stir up a feeling to racial hatred." The fact was that the Punjab was driven to line up with Bengal, already seething with discontent at the time, because the local authorities had indentified themselves with an Englishman, responsible for



the death of a helpless Indian. Prosecution against the *Punjabee* was launched because that paper had exposed the miscreant. This drove the people of the Punjab to protest against Government action. There were other causes also which had led to deep discontent like the Colonisation Bill, the Land Alienation Act Amendment Bill, the abnormal increase in land revenue and the increase in the canal water rates on Bari Doab Canal. The panic-stricken Sir Denzil arrested Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh, uncle of the great martyr Sardar Bhagat Singh, served deportation orders on them under Regulation III of 1818 on May 9, 1907 and sent them away to Mandalay jail.

Since no reason for such extraordinary action was given there was much resentment in the country against this treatment to a topmost leader esteemed and admired alike by the militant wing of Indian Nationalists led by Tilak and the moderate wing by Gokhale. The demand was made that Lajpat Rai should be tried in a court of law or released forthwith. A report was published in those days in the *Englishman* of Calcutta that the suspicion against Lajpat Rai was that he had attempted to conspire with the Ameer of Afghanistan against the British Raj in India, on the flimsy pretext that Lajpat Rai had tried to contact him while the Ameer was here as the guest of the Government of India and was received with enthusiasm by the people also in the beginning of the year 1907. Since all this was without any foundation, Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were suddenly released from detention in Mandalay on November 1 on the convenient excuse that the Seditious Meetings Act was there to deal with undesirable speeches and assemblies.

This was almost on the eve of the session of the Indian National Congress of that year that was to be held at Nagpur as previously decided but was actually held at Surat for reasons into which it is not necessary to go. The cry was raised that Lajpat Rai should be elected to preside over this Session, Tilak being strongly in support of the cry. But Lajpat Rai himself announced that he was not a candidate in the field and ultimately Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh was elected according to the arrangements made by Pherozeshan Mehta and Gokhale. Lajpat Rai was elected to preside over the special Congress Session at Calcutta in 1920, after Tilak's death, when the non-cooperation programme propagated by Gandhiji was approved by that session and confirmed a few months thence at Nagpur in December 1920.

Lajpat Rai was born on January 28, 1865, at Dhudhike in Ludhiana district of the Punjab. He died a martyr's death on November 17, 1928, at Lahore. His father, Radha Kishan was a teacher of Urdu in a Government School. He greatly admired Swami Dayananda as he did Sir Syed Ahmed. For him Dayananda Saraswati embodied in his person the resurgent Hinduism while Syed Ahmed, personified reformed Islam and united Indian nationhood. Syed Ahmed, however, soon disillusioned him by breaking away from the Congress and assiduously planting the seeds of Muslim communalism. Lajpat Rai inherited from his earnestness for the reform of Hinduism and his zeal for constructive endeavour in all fields from his mother. In his school days, he acquired a passion for reading, writing and speaking and that proved very serviceable to him in later life. In 1895 he finished his scholastic education by becoming a pleader and starting legal practice at the District Court of Hissar. Later he moved to Lahore and soon rose to a high position in the profession. He became a prosperous lawyer but never cared to amass wealth or indulge in a luxurious life. He spent very little on himself but dutifully met the requirements of his parents, younger brothers and sisters and his own family. His practice in those days was to make over his entire surplus to the Arya Samaj to whose social reform and social service work he was greatly devoted. Its virile, self-respecting and courageous attitude had a great appeal for him.

Lajpat Rai soon became a leading figure in the Arya Samaj movement. After the Swami's death, Lajpat Rai and his associates founded the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College and in his memory after the pattern of the Fergusson College in Poona. It did not take long for him to realise that though religious, moral, educational and industrial reform was necessary for the country's all-sided development, political reform alone could be a guarantee and a possible means for bringing about total reform. Acquisition of political power thus became for him the most pressing need as it was realised by Tilak and Gandhi in their careers. Political freedom was a necessity and the Indian National Congress had made it its business to strive for it and so every patriotic person was attracted to its programme. Lajpat Rai was also similarly attracted at the young age of 23 and he soon became a leading figure on its platform. He was in demand for speaking on some resolutions in every session and thus he soon acquired an all India fame and position as a national leader.

Lajpat Rai came to be known as the spokesman of the militant Congressmen whose ranks were daily swelling because of the anti-national policies Lord Curzon was following during his seven years of viceroyalty. He formed the trinity of militant Indian nationalism with Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal during the anti-Partition agitation. Yet he did not neglect constructive work in his own province. The Dayananda College soon became an important educational institution in India and was the admiration of all as a privately managed efficient institution. Lajpat Rai had a great share in building it up. He also devoted his energies to building orphanages, schools and widow's homes. He worked hard to improve the lot of the untouchables. He was a great believer in the Swadeshi principle and its application to the industrial and commercial field and therefore took a leading part in establishing the Punjab National Bank and the Lakshmi Insurance Company. Some measure of how popular Lajpat Rai had become may be from the fact that after he was restored to liberty after a few months detention in Mandalay after he was deported there, he contested an election to the Lahore Municipality. He created such enthusiasm among the voters that even the deaf, dumb and maimed went to vote for him. It is recorded that one mute person took Lajpat Rai's picture with him to show for whom he wanted to vote. Needless to say that on election to the Municipality, he did much useful work for the citizens of Lahore. On return from detention, another notable thing he did was that he filed a defamation suit against the English newspaper that in his absence had carried on a campaign against him by describing him as a seditionist. This reminds one of the similar steps that Tilak took against Sir Valentine Chirol and the *Times* and the Macmillan Co. Ltd. after his release from Mandalay. While Tilak lost, Lajpat Rai won and the damages he received were devoted by him to charitable purposes.

After the split in the Congress at Surat, Lajpat Rai did not choose to walk out with his Nationalist friends. He continued to take part in what came to be known as the Convention Congress in subsequent years, yet he found that he was treated as a suspect by the Moderates and the Government. He felt it was unsafe to remain in India and therefore left for Japan in 1913 and from there he went to England. The First World War broke out and he went to America in 1914. For six years he remained in America and did much work in favour of building up opinion in favour of Indian

**Nationalism.** In America he spent his time in lecturing to American audiences on Indian matters and writing books. *Arya Samaj*, *England's Debt to India* and *Young India* are only some of them. He had already written *The story of My Deportation* while he was in India and in his earlier years he wrote a number of biographies in Urdu including those of Mazzini, Garibaldi, Shivaji, Shrikrishna and Dayananda Saraswati.

This is the way he trained himself for a courageous and determined public career. While in America, he founded a branch of the Home Rule League. When Tilak was thinking seriously of foreign embassies in an unofficial way in London, Paris, Tokyo and Washington, he had Lajpat Rai in his mind for the ambassador's position in U.S.A.

Lajpat Rai returned to India in 1920 and all India was jubilant over the event. He received addresses of welcome at Bombay, Delhi and Lahore among other places. In September 1920, he was elected to preside over the special session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta. Lajpat Rai like many other Nationalists was not originally in favour of the Non-cooperation programme, propagated by Mahatma Gandhi. But at the Nagpur Session, he threw his lot completely with Gandhiji like so many others. He threw himself heart and soul in the movement and in pursuance of the item of boycott of Government educational institutions, started a National College at Lahore. He also instituted the Tilak School of Politics, somewhat on the lines of the London school of Economics. He collected nine lakhs of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund in about ten days, by going on a whirlwind tour of the Punjab. Such was the great esteem in which he was held.

Lajpat Rai was arrested in 1921 because he broke the ban on addressing public meetings by presiding at a meeting of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee. He was tried and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. After a few months, he was released as a result of a demand in the Punjab Council but was arrested again. During the second term of imprisonment awarded to him, he fell seriously ill. It was found that his condition was critical and he was released unconditionally. He went to Solan to recoup his health. When he was well again, he found that Deshbandhu Das and Motilal Nehru had founded the Swaraj Party and joined it. He was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly as a Swarajist. He

made his mark as a fearless fighter for the national cause on the floor of the Assembly. He found that his Congress colleagues were not doing their duty by the Hindu majority in the country and were pandering to Muslim passions and prejudices and so he thought it fit to associate himself with the Hindu Sangathan movement and the Hindu Maha Sabha in alliance with leaders like Pandit Malaviya, N. C. Kelkar and M. R. Jayakar. He sought re-election as a Hindu Nationalist and was duly returned. By this time the Simon Commission was appointed. Like all Nationalists he was in favour of the boycott of this all-white Simon Commission and it was under his lead that a resolution advocating its boycott was passed. The Congress and other political parties did not merely boycott this Commission which was appointed to explore further possibilities of political progress of India, but also formed an All Parties Conference and produced what has passed in India's political history as the Nehru Report on political reform in India.

Lajpat Rai undertook to tour the whole of India in order to muster support to it. He had begun his work in earnest in Lahore itself when the Simon Commission arrived there on October 20, 1928. Lajpat Rai was at the head of a procession of citizens which was organised to demonstrate their discontent against it. The procession was declared illegal and to disperse the crowds the police resorted to a lathi charge. Lajpat Rai was grievously injured and as a consequence taken seriously ill. This assault was made on him by a British officer without any provocation whatsoever. Some of Lajpat Rai's friends who were with him felt that it was premeditated and was part of a plan to do away with him. Men like Dr. Satyapal, Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Raizada Hansraj, Dr. Mohammed Alam and Lala Jagannath tried to shield Lajpat Rai, but the British officer concentrated the attack on him. He never recovered from the illness that followed and passed away on November 17, 1928. Jawaharlal Nehru said in this connection, "National humiliation, involved in the assault on him, hastened his end."

Lajpat Rai's patriotism was translated into several concrete things. Dnyana da Anglo-Vedic College, National College, Tilak School of Politics, Dwarkadas Library, Punjab National Bank, Lakshmi Insurance Company, *Bande Mataram* (an Urdu daily) *The People* (English weekly), Gulabdevi Hospital, Servants of People Society were living monuments to the great man. In later years, he

was also attracted to the working class movement, having presided over the First Trade Union Congress of India and declared socialism as the goal of progressive and modern India. His paper, *the People* also showed clearly socialist tendencies in its writings. But he did not live long enough further to shape his ideas.

When Miss Catherine Mayo wrote a most damaging book to India's morals by attacking many social customs of the Hindus, Lajpat Rai wrote a rejoinder to prove how depraved American society was in its morals. Gandhiji called the American woman author 'a gutter inspector' while commenting on the book in spite of all his non-violence. But Lajpat Rai proved by facts and figures that America was far more depraved than India in her morals.

## AUROBINDO GHOSE

AUROBINDO GHOSE has gone down in modern Indian History as an apostle of nationalism, national self-respect and propounder of Indian Philosophy. This role was prominently played by him during the Swadeshi movement that followed the partition of Bengal. Hundreds of Indians received inspiration from his writings in the *Bande Mataram* and his speeches.

How strange it seems that such a man should have been a completely Anglicised person who did not know his mother-tongue until he was 21 years old and had passed the I.C.S. examination ; but that was a fact. Born on August 15, 1872 the third son of Dr. Krishnananthan Ghose, he spent his early childhood with his parents in Khulna. His father was a confirmed admirer of everything western and he wanted his children to be brought up entirely as westerners. This insistence went to such an extent that no Bengali-speaking servant was engaged in the Ghose household lest Aurobindo and his brothers might, by chance, pick up that language! The servants spoke either Hindustani or English. The three brothers were sent to a wholly European school at Darjeeling known as the Loretto Convent School. It was run by an Irishman for European children and the medium of instruction was English.

So, Aurobindo and his brothers had only English children as companions and English was the language of communication both in the school and in the boarding house. He managed to have a smattering of Bengali only when he was appointed as probationer after passing the I.C.S. examination. He managed to learn the language tolerably well, only after he came to Baroda in 1893 in that State's service. However, he had become a master of French, Latin, and Greek. At the instance of his father and without the help of a tutor, Aurobindo passed the open competition for the Indian Civil Service with distinction. But he did not pay any attention to riding and, as a result he failed in the first test. Usually a second chance was given when the student was found otherwise brilliant, and Aurobindo would surely have been given a second chance had he cared to take

it. When he learnt the result he was playing cards with his brother. Benoy and together they smoked off the failure. The third brother, Man Mohan, rebuked them for this frivolousness but, Aurobindo did not care.

The presumption, therefore is that he deliberately avoided passing the riding test so that he could well avoid the obligation of pursuing an official career. As history tells us, he was destined to figure for quite a different mission. Aurobindo, however, completed quite creditably his university career and, at the instance of Mr. James Cotton, brother of Sir Henry Cotton, H H. Sayaji Rao Maharaj of Baroda sent him a call to join the Baroda State service. First he worked as a probationer in the Revenue Settlement Department on Rs. 200 a month. Then he became a lecturer in French at the Baroda College and soon he became Professor of English language and literature. When he left for Calcutta to join the anti-partition agitation in 1906, he was Vice-principal of the College drawing Rs. 750 a month.

While at Baroda, he contributed to the columns of the *Induprakash* a series of articles under the title "New Lamps for Old." That was from August 1893 to February 1894. They vividly reflected his political opinions emphasising, as they did self-help and character on the part of Indians. He condemned the way of prayers and petitions. These articles attracted the attention of Ranade who was then a High Court Judge in Bombay and Counsellor of the proprietor of the *Induprakash*. He feared that they were too much in advance of the times and Government might pounce upon the paper if they were not discontinued; so they were discontinued.

Such are the antecedents of one who became a stout apostle of Indian nationalism, an extremist leader, a jail-bird and a seditionist. But after his release from jail he changed so much that he went to Pondicherry, shut himself up there in the pursuit of Yoga and would not come out to participate in the movement for freedom even when men like Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Chittaranjan Das appealed to him to do so. Taking his wonderful editorship of the *Bande Mataram* into consideration, Mr. Joseph Baptista, as chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Democratic Publishing Company at the instance of Tilak requested him to take up the editorship of the *Democrat* which was to be started on the eve of the Montagu Reforms. But he declined the offer, as he did not want to take part in current politics. Yet he had kept himself abreast as could be seen



from a response he gave to Mrs Besant's pressing request in 1918 regarding the Montagu reforms. He wrote a letter for publication in her *New India* but made a condition that it should be anonymous. So it was signed "An Indian Nationalist" and he characterised the Montague Reforms as "A Chinese Puzzle" and "A Great Shadow"

What he wrote to Mr. Baptista was as follows: "Your offer is a tempting one, but I am sorry I cannot accept it. I must mention my reasons to you in brief. I do not intend to return to British India now. Nor is the British Government, so far as I know, in favour of my return; it would probably mean immediate incarceration for me. I have so much work on hand that I am unwilling to waste my time by becoming a guest in his Majesty's Hotel. But even if I had full liberty, I would not return to India now.

"I came here with a distinct objective. I wanted liberty and peace for that purpose. It has nothing to do with the political situation in the country. What I should do for India I am doing in my own way. It is not possible for me to start any other activity until my present object is fulfilled. If I go to India now, I shall have to take part in so many things.

"Pondicherry is my place of seclusion. It is my cave for *tapas* and *tapas* of my own brand and not the usual renunciation. Before I come out, I must perfect myself inwardly in the Sadhana that I have undertaken.

"I do not look upon politics as inferior nor do I think that I have outgrown them. I have always emphasised spiritual life and I am doing that much more fully now. But my idea of spirituality is not one which preaches Sanyasa and an escape from the world. I do not believe in hatred or disgust for things of this world. There is nothing that is not spiritual in a lesser or higher degree. In a perfect spiritual life, there is scope for everything.

"What is now being done in the political field seems to differ much from what I would like to do. My sole object during 1903-10 was to create among people a will to be free and to divert the energies of the Congress from the useless ways it was following into self-reliant and militant channels. That work has now been accomplished and the Amritsar Congress has proved it.

"I believe that the country is now on the way to freedom and will achieve it. But sometimes I think on how it will shape itself after freedom. That is a very important thing.

“ I believe that India has a soul, has genius of its own. I generally subscribe to principles of some kind of social democracy. But they should be in tune with the traditions and the culture of India. Very few seem to have clear ideas about this aspect of the matter.

“ I have no definite programme just at present. I have been thinking about these matters, but there has been no clear formation yet. So I am not in a position to give anything concrete to the people ”

Similarly, he wrote to his brother Barindra after he was released from Andamans. It was written in April 1920. It is a very lengthy letter in which he has declined to leave Pondicherry saying “ I shall not go to my country just now, not because the country is not ready, but because I am not ready. What can an imperfect man do, in the midst of imperfect men?” One does not know whether he reached any perfection before he expired and ever thought of coming out. All that is known is that he died of kidney trouble on November 26, 1950, refused to see people from outside and had allotted specific days for allowing people just to see him, some three or four times in a year, but he would not talk to them. Yet people went to see him. What inspiration they received from him is known only to themselves. His post-Pondicherry life is a sealed book for most of his fellow-country men, though some of them claim to decipher it by referring to his *Sadhana* in pursuit of a better world and a better mankind.

Whatever that may be, he shone at his brightest as a powerful journalist and a political agitator after the Surat Congress split at the end of 1907. Soon after that, Tilak was proceeded against on a charge of sedition and sent to jail for six years. That was at the end of July 1908. The immediate reason was publication of an article in the *Kesari* on Mystery of Bombs. Khudiram Bose had thrown a bomb at Muzaffarpur as a result of which two English women met with their end. This outrage was the first of its kind in India. The police began investigations and a miniature bomb factory was soon discovered at Maniktalla. A number of people including Barindra Ghose, brother of Aurobindo were arrested. Aurobindo was also suspected and arrested at 5 a.m on May 2, 1908. He was to be led to prison in ropes. But Bhupendra Nath Basu persuaded the police to abandon the idea. The police found nothing in their search. He was then living with his wife

Mrinalini and his sister Sarojini. He was about to begin to edit the Bengali daily *Navashakti* and moved to the new premises with that object in view. Besides the two Ghose brothers, 34 other persons were implicated and hauled up for trial.

Aurobindo's arrest created as much sensation as the bomb-throw itself. Universal resentment was felt and the fact that he was sought to be led to jail in ropes was condemned everywhere. The trial, known as the Maniktolla Bomb Case or the Alipore Case, was conducted within the precincts of the jail itself, and is probably one of the most famous political trials in Indian history. It was significant, especially in one particular, which was that one of the accused was Aurobindo, the saintly patriot. Throughout the trial he was nonchalant and hardly followed the proceedings. He was busy with what he called "his own work."

While the case dragged on, supreme efforts were made by the prosecution to implicate Aurobindo and secure a conviction. No less a legal luminary than Eardley Norton was engaged by them. But all was to no avail and Aurobindo emerged innocent, unscathed and triumphant. The able and prophetic advocacy of Chittaranjan raised the trial almost to an epic level. His famous final appeal to the court still rings in the ears because it has proved to be true to the letter. He said to Mr. Beachcroft, who was the judge in the case, "My appeal to you is this, that long after the controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil and the agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed, not only in India but across distant seas and lands. Therefore, I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this court, but before the bar of the High Court of History." The assessors in the case declared Aurobindo "not guilty" on the 13th of April, 1909. About three weeks later, the judge acquitted him while he sentenced most of the other accused to various terms of imprisonment.

Aurobindo emerged from Alipore a changed man and stepped into a changed India. Jail had not only given him a vision of God but had also transformed him from a flaming agitator into a mature and serene political philosopher. The emphasis now on 'Yoga for humanity' had strengthened. He saw that the steam roller of repression had silenced many a voice and stopped many a pen and sent all the

topmost agitators to jail. In his Uttarpur speech he made a feeling reference to Tilak :.....I find all changed. One who always sat by my side and was associated in my work is a prisoner in Burma." He realized also that the enthusiasm once manifested through the million-throated shouts of *Bande Mataram* had cooled into a sullen but ominous silence. And yet he carried on his work as he saw the hand of God even in repression. "Without suffering there can be no growth," he said. He proceeded with indomitable faith in the future.

At the Hooghly political conference in September 1909, he carried the members with him in passing the nationalist resolutions. But all the time, he inwardly felt the call for seclusion. The call to attend to the urges in the higher regions of his consciousness was imperative. He was fully assured of the future political destiny of India, and felt that he could not cease to lead the movement. He visualised that other times and new leaders would bring about its consummation. It was this urge and realization that ultimately led him out of the political field and into those ethereal regions, where one has to battle with far subtler forces to win greater triumphs, of a kind known and experienced only by spirits, comparatively free from attachment to the lower planes of consciousness.

Meanwhile, in July 1909, there was reliable intimation from sister Nivedita that Aurobindo would again be arrested and this time his prize would be deportation. She had her own sources of information. But such things never worried Aurobindo. With the experience of his many prosecutions, he knew that he lived a charmed life and the net of bureaucracy was not capable of holding him. One thing was obvious however, he could not stay in India yet be out of and free from politics.

It was at this juncture that he published an open letter to his countrymen which he considered to be his last political will and testament, as envisaged by him. Its contents effectively changed the intentions of the Government. In it he exhorted nationalists not to be unnerved by the coming or going of leaders. He said "The party is there, not less pervading and powerful as before but in want of a policy and a leader. The first it may find, the second, only God can give. The men who have led hitherto, have been strong men of high gifts and commanding genius, great enough to be protagonists of any other movement ; but even they were not sufficient to satisfy one which is the chief current of a world-wide revolution. Therefore a

the Nationalist Party, custodians of the future must await for the man who is to come, calm in the midst of calamity, hopeful under defeat, sure of eventual emergence of triumph and always mindful of the responsibility which they owe not only to India, but to the world." The leader came and that was Gandhiji.

A very petty-minded allegation was made by the authorities that Aurobindo left Indian territory to avoid arrest. Aurobindo issued a statement in the "Madras Times" that he had retired to Pondicherry in response to a call for the pursuit of higher Yoga and that the warrant which he was alleged to have tried to avoid was actually issued after he reached Pondicherry. Moreover, when the Government pursued the matter by prosecuting the printer of the "open letter," which was responsible for the warrant issued for Aurobindo's arrest, the result vindicated Aurobindo. It is true, the printer was convicted in the lower court but Justice Woodroffe and Justice Fletcher of the High Court acquitted him and declared that "the open letter" was not at all seditious.

## BIPIN CHANDRA PAL

A born rebel—that is the aptest and most appropriate, though rather brief but significant description of Bipin Chandra Pal. He was a journalist all his life, starting on that career at the young age of 22 in 1880. His first adventure was a Bengali weekly journal *Paridarshak* which he ran from Sylhet. He edited the *Tribune* in 1887-88, started *New India* in 1901, *Bande Mataram* in 1906, published the fortnightly journal *Swaraj* in London in 1909 and founded the monthly *Hindu Review* in Calcutta in 1912. He edited the daily *Independent* and the weekly *Democrat* in Allahabad in 1919-20 and the *Bengalee* in 1924-25. He was, besides, a regular contributor to the *Modern Review*, the *Amtit Bazar Patrika*, the *Englishman*, the *Statesman* and many other journals. In the words of the late Mr. N. C. Kelkar, who was an equally prolific writer, Bipin Chandra Pal wrote words in torrents.

This is not to say that he was merely a penny-a-liner. One of the architects of Bengal's renaissance, he strode the country like a giant in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth. Through the written word and the spoken, through a long life of suffering and sacrifice, an unrelenting adherence to the principles he professed and he awakened the country with a rare clarity of vision to a consciousness of inner strength. He was a publicist per excellence.

Those who push the pen powerfully are said to be shy of the platform. This is not at all axiomatic because numerous examples of those who wielded their tongue and pen with equal power could be easily cited. In the case of Bipin Chandra Pal, perhaps his tongue was more effective and sharper than his pen. But this differentiation could be easily dismissed as that between Tweedledom and Tweedledee. His oratory was not mere command over words.

As Aurobindo Ghose said, "He spoke under an inspiration which he himself was unable to resist." Srinivasa Sastri, himself an orator of no mean order, remarked with reference to Bipin Chandra Pal's Madras speeches of 1907, "Oratory had never dreamt of such

triumphs in India. The power of the spoken word had never been demonstrated on such a large scale."

Bipin Chandra Pal was born in a village in Sylhet district, now in East Pakistan, on November 7, 1858. His father Ramchandra Pal was a man of strong character, a hard disciplinarian and though well off, believed in bringing up his children the hard way. A strict believer in the edicts of Chanakya the law-giver, he treated Bipin fondly till the age of five, subjected him to stern discipline for the next ten years and treated him as an equal and a friend when he was sixteen. His rebellious spirit showed itself when he was reading in the Presidency College, while yet in his teens, by joining the Brahmo Samaj, much to the displeasure of his father.

This led to his complete alienation from his father. Not only did his father stop sending remittances to him, but he disinherited him by a will. He was also excommunicated by his society. Pal struggled for a year in order to continue his studies but had to give them up and seek employment. From this time began his life of poverty which lasted till almost his end. He was appointed headmaster of the Cuttack Academy but had soon to give up that post also on a point of self-respect. He attempted to run a national school in his own Sylhet. From there he went to Bangalore and he came headmaster of a school there.

Shivanath Shastri, under whose influence Pal was drawn to the Brahmo Samaj, was responsible for getting for him the job in Bangalore. He was also indirectly instrumental in introducing him to a child widow whom he subsequently married. This still further alienated him from his father. Strangely enough, though both the parties were Bengalees, this marriage was solemnised in Bombay at the Prarthana Samaj. In 1882, Pal again went back to Calcutta. Shortly afterward, his father sent for him and they were reconciled to each other. His father made his will on his death-bed and made over all his property to him. To those present he said "For ten years I did not see Bipin's face. By a previous will I disinherited him absolutely. All those years I would not allow him to come near me. But I am convinced that while he went his own way, out of regard for what he believed to be his *dharma*, he did not by practising one thing and professing another destroy my *dharma*. He is not a *haramzada*. Besides I thought this also; that though there are people who would like to have what little property I may leave behind me, there is no one excepts Bipin, whatever may be his

religious principles, who would, after my death protect with all his life, the honour of my wife and my daughter. This is why I called him back."

With his father's death, Pal's youth, as it were, came to an end. As long as he was alive, near or far, rebel or reconciled, Pal felt that he was under his father's protection. It was in the same year 1886, that he made his appearance on the platform of the Indian National Congress at the Madras Session. He spoke on the resolution demanding the repeal of the Arms Act. His speech was received with wild cheers and the delegates wanted him to continue even after the time allotted to him was over. He continued to appear on the Congress platform every year till 1907. In that year, came the split in the Congress and Bipin Chandra Pal left the Congress with Tilak. He rejoined it again with Tilak in 1916 and also went with him to England as a member of the Home Rule League Deputation to appear before the Parliamentary Committee set up in connection with the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.

The period which covered his life (1858-1932) was also a period of great changes in the religious, social and political life of the people and as Lord Ronaldshay has said in his book *Heart of Aryavarta* "his pen played a not inconsiderable part in the social and political ferment that have stirred the waters of Indian life." Being a highly sensitive person, his mind quickly responded to the influences of the movements of his time. He was dubbed a successor to Keshub Chander Sen, because he was a very earnest and eloquent preacher in the Brahmo Samaj. His contribution to the building up of Indian nationalism has been freely acknowledged by all his contemporaries. For instance, Aurobindo Ghose referred to him as "one of the mightiest prophets of nationalism" and Binoy Kumar Sarkar regarded him as "the father of revolutionary thought in Bengal."

Pal's nationalist propaganda made the opponents of India's freedom immensely uneasy. The *Times* paid him the left-handed compliment of being the most outspoken of Extremist in 1906 and remarked that in enunciating the doctrine of Swaraj at the Calcutta Congress in 1906, Dadabhai Noroji "had taken a leaf out of the book of the extremists and he had practically followed the mischievous propaganda of Bipin Chandra Pal."

The *Historian's History of the World* spoke of him as "the chief purveyor of seditious ideas who promulgated the doctrine of



Swaraj or complete political independence. Sir Valentine Chirol extensively quoted from his Madras speeches in his *Indian Unrest* characterising them as "the most authoritative programme of advanced political thought in India."

Pal preached complete freedom in these speeches responsible for the political upheaval in the south during the years that followed. The report said, "An outburst of seditious activity followed upon the visit of Bipin Chandra Pal and resulted in various trials in 1908."

Did Bipin Chandra Pal preach sedition? No. He simply expressed the will of an enslaved and emasculated people to be free. What he wrote in *Bande Mataram* of September 8, 1906 would be very typical of what he spoke and wrote in those days. He was quite frank and unambiguous about it as usual. Said Pal, "The time has come when in the interest of truth and civic advancement and the freedom of the people, our British friends should be distinctly told that while things they have done for us already, the sacrifices they have made to make our lot easy and their yoke light, we cannot any longer suffer ourselves to be guided by them in our attempt at political progress and emancipation. Their point of view is not ours. They desire to make the Government of India popular without ceasing in any sense to be essentially British; we desire to make it autonomous absolutely free of British control."

Similarly in a speech in Madras in 1907, he declared, "Our programme is that we shall so work in the country, so combine the resources of the people; so organise the forces of the nation; so develop the instinct of freedom in the community, that by these means we will compel the submission to our will of any power that may set itself against us. If you ask me to state in general terms what are the methods and the means, what are the instruments that will further this ideal of Swaraj in this country, my reply shall be that these means and methods are included in what is known in political science as the methods of Passive Resistance. It means not resistance that is not active, but non-aggressive resistance. We stand within the limits of the law that we have still in this country. We shall respect that law as long as that law shall respect our primary rights which constitute the authority of every government—whether that government be a despotic government or a constitutional government, rights which no government can create and which therefore, no government can destroy. As long as the laws of this government will respect our primary rights of life, person and

property and other similar primary rights, so long we propose ourselves to be within the bounds of law ; and passive resistance means resistance offered by a people from within the limits of such law."

That was Bipin Chandra Pal's clear and unequivocal position, but Lord Minto, the then Viceroy wrote to Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India in April 1907, "I do not think we should allow Bipin Chandra Pal to stump the country, preaching sedition as he has been doing." But he could not be caught legally for sedition and failing to prosecute him for sedition, Lord Minto proposed his deportation. The Advocate-General of Madras of the day opined, "though Pal's speeches were highly inflammatory they were not seditious." Even Sir Valentine Chirol significantly acknowledged that "however incompatible with the British rule may be the propositions set forth by Bipin Chandra Pal, they contain no incitement to violence, no violent diatribes against individual Englishmen."

Deported he was all the same, but by himself. His voluntary exile in England during 1908 to 1911 saw a new transformation in his thought processes and outlook. They are well embodied by him in his book *Nationality and Empire*. He became an advocate of a new type of internationalism—a cooperative partnership with Great Britain her colonies and protectorates on the one side and India on the other, based on perfect equality of status for all—a partnership in which, he emphasized, India would have to be given the freest scope for self-fulfilment. He had unusual opportunities of seeing and appreciating the working of world forces and he saw the vision of the evolution of the British Empire into a commonwealth as a logical necessity. Such a large association, if and when possible on the basis of equal partnership would be preferable, he solemnly declared, to an isolated Independent India for which he was previously preaching. Looking at the present constitution of the British Common-wealth, it must be said that he has proved a prophet and precursor of Jawaharlal and Rajagopalachariar.

Pal came back to India and threw himself once more in the nationalist movement but now with a distinct international outlook and emphasis. He said India herself should have a federal structure, such as now she has, for her future national government wherein

the different regions should have freedom consistent with the unity and integrity of India as a whole. As early as 1914 he sounded a stern and sound note of warning against the dangers of Pan-Islamism to Indian unity and nationalism and there too he proved a prophet.

Pal rejoined the Indian National Congress again in 1916 at Lucknow with Tilak and other Nationalist friends and since then till 1920, he was again on the Congress platform making speeches in his stentorian voice. Tilak died in 1920 and Gandhiji started canvassing for his non-cooperation programme against the Panjab atrocities and the Khilafat rape. It was a form of passive resistance and Pal was not against it as such. But Pal believed that Gandhiji was attempting to turn the Congress into something of a religious cult with himself as the Preceptor of the Religion of Ahinsa like another Buddha. He further thought that Gandhiji's ways were not that of a politician but of a saint and he thought that a political association like the Indian National Congress had no business to be an adjunct and a hand-maid of a saint. He, therefore, resolutely fought the triple boycott of courts, colleges and councils, particularly the last, as simply self-stultifying.

He looked upon the programme of Gandhiji as an attempt to take the country back to the stagnation of mediaeval days and he found himself isolated from his friends and adherents in the evening of his life. He courageously put up with this situation of splendid isolation, which continued till his death. During these years he was a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly. He stood alone like this not once but several times in his life. A born rebel, he had to endure such a fate, but he listened only to his inner voice which he considered the voice of God within him.

As Dr. B.C. Roy has said, "the tragedy of the later days of Mr. Pal was not peculiar to Bengal, but it was the fate of most public men all over the world. He made great sacrifices for love of his country, truth and God. It was perhaps the greatest sacrifice of his life when on account of his strong convictions he lived in splendid isolation from his friends and his erstwhile colleagues during the last few years of his life. But his greatness lay in the fact that he never yielded to any one in his devotion to truth and God and to his country." That was always his way. His conscience was his God.

A personal example of his courage of conviction and submission to dictates of his conscience may be cited in conclusion. In October 1907 he was summoned as a witness in the sedition case against Aurobindo Ghose, known as the Alipore Bomb Case, but he refused to give evidence on conscientious grounds. All the efforts and warning of the trying magistrate to make him change his mind failed to shake him and as a result he was sentenced to six months simple imprisonment for contempt of court.

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## GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

WHAT strikes one at once about Gopal Krishna Gokhale is that he was the shortest-lived of the Indian patriots who distinguished themselves in the movement for India's political freedom. He was born in 1866 and died in 1915, so that he had not even completed fifty years of his life when he breathed his last.

But how crowded with activity and achievement is that life of less than 50 years ! He achieved within the short span of life allotted to him so much that it is difficult to cite the example of another Indian to compare with him.

A graduate at 18, a professor and associate editor of the *Sadharak* at 20, editor of the *Quarterly Journal* and Secretary of the Sarvajanik Sabha at 21, Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Conference at 25, Secretary of the Indian National Congress at 34, Indian Legislator at 36, President of the Indian National Congress at 39, national envoy to the Imperial Government and founder of institutions at 40, a universally recognised Leader of the Opposition in the Indian Parliament, such as it then was till his death, a trusted tribune of the people and a man of truth, rectitude and character in whom the rulers confided at all times, and above all a patriot whom Mahatma Gandhi himself regarded at his master and perfect man on the political field—what a truly marvellous and brilliant career and beyond anybody's emulation !

All this may lead one to conclude that he was a favoured minion of fortune, but as is well said, appearances are often deceptive. Apart from the hardships and rigours of poverty through which he had to go as a child and a young lad, his troubles began since he joined the Deccan Education Society to work with Tilak, Agarkar and others. He was mercilessly attacked by his critics and opponents in public life and being sensitive by temperament, he felt much hurt by it.

The criticism may have been justified sometimes, but not always and its severity was never justifiable because it was so disproportionate. The climax of such criticism was reached when he tendered the

apology in connection with the statements he had made in England about plague administration in Poona in 1897.

Like all ordinary human beings, he had about an equal taste of the bitter and the sweet in life and it was only because his patriotism was pure, his idealism genuine, his determination dogged and his guidance godly coming as it did from that saintly master of his, Ranade, that he never lost sight of the true and the noble in all his struggles and he was able to crowd into so short a life services of such magnitude and splendour.

Tilak very aptly epitomised his achievements by topping his obituary article on Gokhale in the *Desari* by a Sanskrit saying which freely translated, means that it is much better to blaze for a moment than keep smouldering for long. Gokhale was much grieved after he had rendered the famous apology and public criticism thereof and even sulked for some time, but under Ranade's guidance he was his old self again and completely dedicated himself to the service of his people with redoubled vigour.

Gokhale was a teacher for twenty years, two years in the New English School and 18 in the Fergusson College. He was a graduate in Mathematics but taught any subject according to need and was therefore nick-named a 'Professor to Order'. He was particularly fond of teaching English history and economics. What pains Gokhale took to establish his reputation as a teacher may be appreciated by a reference to a story that is still current in Poona. It is an indication of his utter sincerity and capacity for taking infinite pains.

Gokhale had once to teach Southey's *Life of Nelson* to the under-graduates of the Fergusson College. As an admiral's life it was naturally replete with nautical terms which a layman is scarcely expected to be familiar with. As such it was a very unsuitable textbook, but it was there and Gokhale had to teach it. So Gokhale made several trips to Bombay harbour, inspected a variety of ships and a man-of-war, to master all the nautical terms. He was soon able to speak about ships like a professional sailor !

About his teaching of history of England and Europe, Dr. R.P. Paranjpye says, "The subject interested him rather as an image of present day affairs than as a pure subject of study for its own sake. He was always looking to the bearings of past affairs over the present and thus many a time digressed from the matter in hand to talk about present day politics. Thus in the course of lectures on English history, he turned aside for a week to give us a resumé of the history

of Ireland since the Union. He always regarded the course of Irish history as somewhat similar to that of India and he never lost an opportunity of impressing on the minds of the pupils the long course of steady work and disinterested sacrifice which the Irish leaders had shown during a whole country."

During his term as a professor Gokhale was practically under the training of Ranade, who was an exacting master. Gokhale edited the *Savarjanik Sabha Quarterly* and later the *Deccan Sabha Journal* and acted as Secretary of both. He had the best opportunity to study public questions from all their angles and formulate opinion in this period.

Gokhale set to such work with intense application and enthusiasm. He spent dreary hours and spent sleepless nights in doing his prescribed jobs in time, but he would never take the risk of displeasing his master. Their usual engagement was on Wednesdays for discussion on matters in hand.

If Gokhale had temperature or if he was ill, that was not accepted as a valid reason by Ranade for not doing appointed work. The exacting disciplinarian would say, "Fever would vanish by taking medicine, but a Wednesday lost could not be reclaimed."

It is no wonder, therefore, that when Gokhale won the first notable triumph of his public career by his written and oral evidence before the Welby Commission, he had every reason to be pleased with himself, because in the words of Sastri, 'Gokhale cut the most attractive and important figure of all the witnesses that appeared for India.'

They were Surendranath Banerjea, Dinshaw Wacha, G. Subramanya, Aiyar and Dadabhai Naoroji himself, who was a member of the Commission. But how humble Gokhale was ! He wrote to Ranade from England, "If you find time to go through the statements and feel satisfied, I shall have received the only reward I care for."

Gokhale's performance was universally appreciated and any other person would have felt elated but that trait was altogether foreign to Gokhale's nature.

In a letter written to Rao Bahadur G. V. Joshi, he said, "All this high praise really belongs to you and Rao Saheb (Ranade) and not to me. I have received it only as your representative and now I lay it at your feet and Rao Saheb's as our ancient *gurudakshina*. For the most part, my work has been that of a conduit pipe or Edison's phonograph and I have told Sir William Wedderburn and Dadabhai

so. Pray, accept once more this expression of deepest gratitude for the splendid assistance which you so cordially, so cheerfully, gave me and which has enabled me to discharge satisfactorily a great national duty."

In 1900 Gokhale was elected to the Bombay Legislative Council from the constituency represented formerly by Tilak. For two years he was a member of that Council but on Pherozeshah Mehta's retirement from the Viceregal Legislative Council in 1902, Gokhale was unanimously elected to succeed him there. For fourteen subsequent years he was there and during this period he was confronted by the most imperious and the most capable and intellectual of Viceroys, Lord Curzon.

Gokhale's very first budget speech established his reputation as one who gave a new tone to non-official criticism. His attack on the surpluses as a grievous burden on the tax-payer, his refutation of the official theory of the prosperity of the people and his plea for reduction of taxation at once arrested the attention of the country.

For five or six years he carried on like this and his way changed only when the Morley-Minto reforms were introduced. For some time he was considered as a probable Indian Finance Member and Sir Guy Fleet-wood-Wilson is said to have expressed the opinion that he would have been his ideal successor. But it never happened and Gokhale remained a non-official critic of Government all his life.

The year 1905 was the most glorious year in Gokhale's life. A number of events, all indicating that he had become a most trusted leader and representative of the people took place in this year. He founded the Servants of India Society and thus officially and formally declared himself Servant of India.

He was elected to preside over the Indian National Congress Session at Banaras and only a few days before that he had returned after paying his second visit to England, where he had gone as an accredited representative of the Congress with Lajpat Rai to popularise India's cause among the British electorate on the eve of a general election in that country.

In the same year he was elected for the second time President of the Municipality of Poona and he was again nominated by the Congress as its sole representative to negotiate with Morley the question of political reforms.



An extract from Gokhale's presidential address at Banaras would show the trend of his thinking and speaking in England. "We have been now a hundred years under England's rule and yet today four villages out of every five are without a school-house and seven children out of eight are allowed to grow up in ignorance and in darkness ! Militarism, Service interests and the interests of the English capitalists, all take precedence today over the true interests of the Indian people in the administration of the country. Things cannot be otherwise ; for it is government of the people of one country by the people of another and this, as Mill points out, is bound to produce great evils. Now, the Congress wants that all this should be governed first and foremost, in the interests of the Indians themselves. This result will be achieved only in proportion as we obtain more and more voice in the Government of the country. We are prepared to bear and bear cheerfully our fair share of the burdens of the Empire, of which we are now a part, but we want to participate in the privileges also and we object most strongly to be sacrificed as at present in order that others may prosper."

Gokhale had very encouraging conferences with Morley and it seemed that the path of political progress would be smooth. But Gokhale's optimism was soon dispelled, though he was prepared to give as long a rope as possible to the Liberal Party which had then come into power in England.

A new spirit was abroad in India in the wake of the partition of Bengal. It was condemned by all Indians and Morley was anxious that the new phase of the Indian nationalist movement as represented by the slogans of Swadeshi, Boycott, Swaraj and National Education should not outgrow the limits that he would have liked to set to it.

The rise of militant nationalism was the result of the delay in granting immediate political reforms. When they actually came, the rules and regulations made under them took away by the left hand what was conceded by the right.

Yet, Gokhale never withdrew his cooperation and tried to make the best of them with the help and cooperation of people of his way of thinking.

Gokhale was keeping very indifferent health during all his exertions to make the reforms an achievement and often it was quite critical. His absorption in the question of Indians in South Africa,

his visit to that country at Gandhiji's instance and his arduous work in the Royal Commission on Public Services only brought his death nearer and nearer. He worked harder and harder and was anxious to achieve something before he left this world. He knew that his end was approaching.

One of the things on which he had set his heart was the reunion of the Moderates and the Militants in the Indian National Congress. He was unfortunate enough, however, to achieve none of his objectives. The South African question remained unsolved. He did not finish his labours on the Public Services Commission and the Militant-Moderate Union did not come off during his life-time.

This is probably why Gokhale often used to say that his lot and that of his generation was to serve India by their failures. But on that account nothing detracts from the value of his services and sacrifices.

As Tilak truly said of him, "Gokhale was endowed with many qualities. But the supreme quality among them was his self-less and complete dedication to the service of the motherland at a very young age. No one thinks much of those who devote their residual energy and time to public work in a retired life when all their physical and mental powers have ebbed out. But when one comes across an extraordinary person who is endowed with the best of health and intelligence and has all the chances of worldly pleasures within his grasp and knows that he would make the greatest success if he went that way but deliberately turns his back on that alluring prospect and makes a resolve to devote himself to the service of the Motherland and is never weakened in his determination and perseverance, that person must be considered thrice blessed. Gokhale had taken such a pledge and kept it till he breathed his last."

## MOHAMED ALI JINNAH

MOHAMED ALI JINNAH occupies an extraordinary place in India's struggle for freedom. Born in Karachi and domiciled in Bombay, he was a Khoja Mussalman, but wholly an Indian Nationalist until in the last phase of his life he became an inveterate advocate of Pakistan *i.e.* a separate homeland for Indian Muslims. Sheer political ambition and a wounded sense of egoism drove him to take that irretrievable position. This is the inevitable conclusion one reaches after a close study of his career and character.

Is it not a tragedy that one who was hailed as Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity by the national poetess and songstress of India, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu should turn into one who took the firm position that Hindus and Muslims would never socially integrate ?

But this is what happened to this Indian patriot in his later days.

Jinnah lived most of his life in Bombay and was a very successful barrister-at-law in the Bombay High Court. His intrepidity and self-confidence were of a very high order. He was not known to be an erudite lawyer, nor was he considered very well-versed in case law. He had specialised in taking up criminal cases and his *forte* was the Indian Penal Code. After the death of Mrs. Jinnah, who was the only daughter of Sir Dinshaw Manekji Petit, Baronet, Jinnah had lost interest in India and gone to England to settle in London and practise law. Probably because he found that his Indian ways of appearing before the London High Court and the Privy Council were not much appreciated, that he returned to India and thus changed remarkably the course of India's history in the Gandhian era.

A story in his career as a practising advocate in the High Court of Bombay is worth relating here as it throws a flood of light on his fearlessness and confidence in himself. While he was pleading for his client before a certain English High Court Judge, the Judge said, "Remember, Mr. Jinnah, that you are not pleading before a

Third Class Magistrate, please.” Jinnah non-chalantly swayed back his head and instantaneously retorted. “Your Lordship should also remember that you are not addressing a third class moffusil lawyer.” It is this characteristic of Jinnah that was ever present with him under any circumstances that made the late Sir C.Y. Chintamani exclaim once, “I do not suppose there is any man, whatever his position before whom Mr. Jinnah has ever hesitated to say the thing he wanted, in language not merely plain, but blunt.”

Whether it was Sir Alexander Muddiman or Motilal Nehru or Gandhi or Jawaharlal, this was his way. Abul Kalam Azad was in his eyes only a prize-boy of the Congress and men like Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, the Nawab of Chattari or Fazlul Haque were made to apologise to him for breach of discipline. He expelled Begum Shah Nawaz from the Muslim League and never hesitated to wear his contempt for any one on his sleeve if he felt it that way. He stood up to any person of any high rank as he did to multitudes of men if it came to that as the following incident will amply show.

The last session of the Indian National Congress he attended was the Nagpur session at the end of 1920 at which the non-co-operation programme of Mahatma Gandhi was adopted. Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, N.C. Kelkar and other had made speeches in favour of it. Among those who opposed it in the open session were Messrs Jinnah, Baptista and Khaparde. As Jinnah was speaking, he referred to Gandhiji as Mr. Gandhi. There was an uproar from the large gathering. “Call him Mahatma.” Jinnah gracefully conceded.

There was again an uproar from the audience when he referred to the late Mohamed Ali as plain Mr. Mohamed Ali. He was asked by a hundred voices to refer to Mohamed Ali as Maulana. But Jinnah said, “I refuse to be dictated by you. I am entitled to use my discretion in referring to men in the way I consider proper and as long as I am not indecent and unparliamentary, I shall not take your dictation.” Jinnah resisted constant heckling resolutely and referred in his subsequent observations on the non-cooperation resolution to Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali as only Mr. not less than half a dozen times.

Jinnah appeared to be humbly only before Pherozeshah Mehta and Dinshaw Wacha. He also behaved respectfully with Tilak and Gokhale. With all others his manner was such as bordered on rude. It appeared as if he looked down upon people with his “ironed out” poses and theatrical gestures.

Jinnah counted himself among the followers of Pherozeshah Mehta and his ambition once was to be a Gokhale of the Muslims. But with the death of these two in 1915, Jinnah was left as it were without a leader acceptable to him and he carved out his own way in public life. In the third sedition case against Tilak in 1916, Jinnah was Tilak's lawyer both in the Poona First Class Magistrate's Court and in the sessions in the High Court of Bombay. Although Tilak was convicted of sedition in two previous cases, in this third trial he was acquitted, whether due to Jinnah's superb advocacy or a change in the political climate, it is difficult to say. Since then, however, he was noted as a great advocate.

After the acquittal of Tilak in this sedition case, the Home Rule movement he had started spread all over India. Mrs. Besant had also embarked on a similar though independent campaign. Tilak and Besant worked in complete collaboration in those days. Jinnah became President of the Bombay Branch of her Home Rule League more as a protest against her internment by Lord Pentland in Madras than for love of the League. In the War Conference convened by Lord Willingdon, he did not allow Tilak, Kelkar, Horniman and Jamnadas Dwarkadas to make any reference to Home Rule but Jinnah adroitly placed their point of view without resorting to a walk-out like others. He played the role of a perfect democrat, almost a demagogue by joining in company of his wife the agitation against a memorial to Lord Willingdon. The Jinnah People's Memorial Hall near Congress House in Bombay is a standing memory of the Jinnah of those days.

With Tilak's death in 1920 and Jinnah's inability to join Gandhi and due to the separate electorates for Muslims that were strengthened in the Montagu constitution, Jinnah became gradually a spokesman of Muslim Communalism, even though he had kept himself aloof from the Khilafat movement. Leaders of the Congress including Gandhi were unable to retain Jinnah in the Nationalist fold. They failed to manage him, if such an expression can be legitimately used. Gandhiji's efforts to placate him were made too late. Jinnah could never forgive any one for a personal insult to him. An illustration in point may be given here.

Jinnah had gone to Calcutta in 1935 as President of the Muslim Students Conference. Dr. B. C. Roy, Mr. T.C. Goswami and Mr. N. R. Sarkar sought to have a discussion with him on the

Communal Award that the Macdonald Government had given. After a discussion with them Jinnah had agreed to a settlement to have equal seats for Hindus and Muslims by amending the Award. In keeping with this scheme, joint electorates would have been established in Bengal. But the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee allowed this success to slip. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, its President did not see Jinnah at the appointed hour. He cancelled the appointment three times. This was something that Jinnah could never put up with. He just did not care and left for Bombay.

In Montagu's Diary, there is a very significant remark about Jinnah. "At the root of all Mr. Jinnah's activities, there is ambition." Jinnah's character is worth study with this guiding hint. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has made a very correct estimate of Jinnah in his book, *Thoughts on Pakistan*, Says Ambedkar. "He (Jinnah) may be too self-opinionated an egoist without the mask and has perhaps a degree of arrogance which is not compensated by an extraordinary intellect or equipment. It may be that on that account, he is unable to reconcile himself to a second place and work with others in that capacity for a public cause. He may not be over-flowing with ideas, although he is not, as his critics make him out to be, an empty-headed dandy, living upon the ideas of others. It may be that his fame is built up more on art and less on substance. At the same time it is doubtful, if there is a politician in India to whom the adjective "incorruptible" can be more fittingly applied. Any one who knows what his relations with the British Government have been, will admit that he has always been their critic, if indeed he has not been their adversary. No one can buy him."

Such a man surely contributed much to rouse the self-respect of Muslims and for long he inspired younger Indians to develop a nationalist outlook, however lamentable may be the transformation that came over him in later years.

This writer had interviewed Jinnah three or four times. but that was before he became a confirmed Pakistani. After he became a staunch advocate of Pakistan, *Filmindia* asked this writer to see him and get him to talk about films. But it was found that he had decided to be completely non-communicative as the following dialogue between this writer and Jinnah will show.

"I have come to see you on behalf of *Filmindia* and request you to say a few words about films as previously did some Indian

celebrities like Dr. Radhakrishnan, Rajagopalachariar, Jayakar and Naidu." I said making a present of a fresh copy of that periodical to Jinnah.

Without saying one word about the copy or opening it to see what it contained, he only said, "I know nothing about films and I cannot say anything useful about the matter. Will you, therefore, excuse me and save your time and mine?"

"You must have seen, one time or other, some Indian or foreign films and could say something about them as the others did."

"No. What suited those great men and women does not suit me."

"Do you never see pictures?"

"Rarely."

"While in England you may have seen some pictures."

"Yes, but I have no recollection of them."

I knew well that Dorothy Lamour was his favourite actress and he did not miss her pictures. So I persisted in my questions.

"Did you not see any Indian picture of late?"

"No."

"Did you not see *Padosi*, a Prabhat production?"

"No."

"You never heard about its theme?"

"No."

"Are you aware that there is a picture in the city now called *Kabir*, around the life of that saint who is equally revered by Hindus and Muslims?"

"No."

"The advertisement of the picture could be easily spotted in the copy of *The Times of India* you have before you. It appears daily."

"May be. I don't read any advertisements."

"If I tell you that it is shown at the Minerva and recommend you to see this picture shall I be overstepping my limits?"

"No. Thank you for the suggestion."

"I hope you will see this picture at your convenience and I shall be obliged to get another interview with you when you may say something about it."

"Don't count on my acting on your suggestion and make your plans. You may ask me whatever else you want to ask."

"Are you aware, that in the Indian film world, Hindus and Muslims work together in all fields—production, direction, acting, sound recording, photography etc."

"No, I am not conversant with the inside of the profession, but you may be right."

"Don't you think that the same state of things obtains in life, in all walks of life?"

"This has nothing to do with the film world. Is this the subject of your interview?"

"Not directly. But your opinion may be useful to me in order to show that the reflection of general life is noticeable in films also."

"That is a different topic. Hindus and Muslims do not and cannot mix socially. That is my confirmed view. If it is contradicted in films, that will have to be reckoned as an exception."

"But if your opinion is contrary to reality?"

"I am sorry, Mr. Parvate, but I don't wish to discuss this topic."

I must admit that I had to accept defeat. This man was determined to communicate nothing and mostly uttered monosyllables. I was helpless and could get nothing out of him.



## ABUL KALAM AZAD

A more colourful personality than that of Abul Kalam Azad has rarely walked across the stage of modern Indian history. Born in 1888 at Mecca of an Indian Muslim exile and an Arab mother from Medina, having contacts in his early age with leading men of the young Turk and young Egyptian movements like Envar Pasha, Kemal Pasha Zuglul Pasha and an Irani radical like Toqui Zadeh, he was supremely proud of his Indian ancestry and nationality. An Indian nationalist with an Asian background and a world outlook, he was a typical representative of oriental culture and one of the most remarkable makers of modern India.

Azad's father was one of the hundreds who fled for their lives from Delhi being unable to put up with the atrocities that were the aftermath of the rising of 1857. Mussalmans of Delhi were looked upon as the accomplices of the rebels and their brutal persecution was part of the process of straightening them out. Muhammad Khairuddin with his literary and learned background thought it wise to retire to Mecca and busy himself in the studies and research of Islamic culture. For generations Azad's family had a tradition of learning. His forefathers came to India from Herat in the days of Babar, the founder of the Moghul dynasty. In the reign of Akbar, Maulana Jalaluddin became famous as a religious divine. In Shah Jehan's days an ancestor was appointed Governor of Agra Fort.

Azad's father was about 25 when he settled down in Mecca. His father-in-law, Sheikh Mohammad Zaher, was a great scholar of Medina and he naturally appreciated the scholarship of Muhammad Khairuddin who became even more famous when an Arabic work of his was published in ten volumes in Egypt. Khairuddin maintained his contacts with India, often stayed in Bombay and Calcutta, toured extensively in Iraq, Syria and Turkey and had disciples in all these centres. For some time he stayed at Constantinople at the court of Sultan Abdul Majid who patronised his literary work. Yielding to pressure from his Indian disciples he came back to India and settled down in Calcutta in 1890. Azad was then two years old. About a year later his mother died.

Khairuddin believed in the old ways of life. He had no faith in Western education and never thought of giving Azad any education of the modern type, which in his opinion destroyed religious faith. So from his early age, Azad's education in Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Koranic lore, philosophy, mathematics and logic was of the traditional type. His father and his friends taught him at home. At the age of 14 he became so erudite as to teach students in this whole course.

It was only after Azad's father had died in 1909 that he was able to slake his thirst for modern knowledge. He came across the writings of Sir Syed Ahmed, founder of the Aligarh Muslim University, who had made fervent appeals to Indian Mussalmans to take to a study of English and the modern sciences. Azad was greatly impressed by his views and decided to study English. He helped himself with self-teachers, a grammar and a dictionary and soon acquired enough acquaintance with English so as to be able to read books on history and philosophy in that language. As a result, he felt his horizon much widened.

Explaining his mental condition at this time he says, "This was a period of great mental crisis for me. I was born in a family which was deeply imbued with religious traditions. All the conventions of traditional life were accepted without question and the family did not like the least deviation from orthodox ways. I could not reconcile myself to the prevailing customs and beliefs and my heart was full of a new sense of revolt. The ideas I had acquired from my family and early training could no longer satisfy me. I felt that I must find out the truth for myself. Almost instinctively I began to move out of my family orbit and seek my own path."

This mental tension lasted for about two years. At last a stage was reached when all the bounds imposed on his mind by family and upbringing were completely shattered. He felt completely free of all conventional ties and decided that he must chalk out his own path. It was about this time that he adopted the pen-name Azad to indicate that he was no longer tied to his inherited beliefs. This was also the period when his political ideas were getting crystallised. He was then about 16 years old. Lord Curzon was Viceroy of India. His imperialist attitude and administrative measures had led to great unrest in India. It was during these days that he came in contact with Babu Shyama Sunder Chakravarty and Babu Aurobindo Ghose. The result was that he became an adherent of the militant school of politics in India and had leanings towards even the revolutionary

school of patriots believing in violent methods for the achievement of political ends.

Revolutionary groups in those days were recruited almost exclusively from the Hindu middle classes. It may even be said that they were Hindu revivalists in their out-look and therefore anti-Muslim. There was sufficient reason for this prejudice. It was clear that the British Government was using the Muslims against Indians political struggle for freedom and the Muslims were willing tools in their game. Sir Bamfylde Fuller, Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal, after Bengal was partitioned by Lord Curzon openly said that Government looked upon the Muslim Community as its favourite wife. The revolutionaries, therefore, felt that the Muslims were an obstacle in the way of freedom and therefore must be removed or neutralised.

When Shyama Sunder Chakravarty introduced Azad to the revolutionaries, he was not considered genuine material and so kept outside of their inner circle. In course of time the error was realised and not only he, but even other young Mussalmans were trusted as perfect patriots like their Hindu confreres. Azad persuaded them to see that the Muslim police officers imported from U.P. to Bengal must not be the standard to judge others and pointed out that like themselves, young Egyptians, Turks and Iranians were also engaged in revolutionary activities in order to throw off European imperialist domination and for the attainment of democratic freedom. About this time, Azad had occasion to tour in Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Turkey and France but had to return without going to London because his father became ill. His father died in 1909.

Since this time, Azad decided upon an educative campaign among the Muslims in order to make them see that their interests were inextricably interwoven with those of their Indian brethren. To that end he established the Al Hilal press and started the Al Hilal weekly newspaper in 1912. This was an epoch-making milestone in Urdu journalism both for its form and content. It achieved unprecedented popularity. The demand for it was so great within three months of its start that all the old issues had to be reprinted as every new subscriber wanted the entire set. It was not a lithographic sheet, but was set in types and published half-tone pictures. This was all novel in Urdu. Within two years Al Hilal reached a circulation of 26000 copies.

The main point in the writings of Al Hilal which means 'the Crescent' was that it was not in the best interests of Muslims to

oppose the wave of Indian nationalism and that the policy of loyalty to the British rule was suicidal. During the war, its attitude was anti-British as usual and so a security of Rs. 2000 was demanded. It was soon confiscated and a fresh security of Rs. 10000 was demanded. That also was confiscated along with the press. Azad started another paper called *Al Balagh*. But the new paper went the same way. Government found that Azad was irrepressible and so he was arrested and interned at Ranchi in Bihar in 1916. He remained in detention till the end of 1919.

Gandhi ji had by this time made his presence felt on Indian public life. He was in Champaran in defence of the indigo plantation workers. Gandhi ji wished to meet Azad but was not allowed to do so. Their first meeting took place a year later in January 1920 at Delhi. The first world war had ended and as a result of the peace treaty that was concluded the Turkish empire had been dismembered and the sacred places of the Muslims in Arabia were placed under Christian rule. The khilafat was abolished. Indian Muslims were greatly exercised over this and agitation was afoot for the restoration of the khilafat. Hindus were behind the Indian Mussalmans in this agitation, Lokmanya Tilak and Gandhi ji having declared that they would stand by the Muslims in their religious demand.

Azad was of the view that prayers, petitions and deputations would lead to nothing, though he did not oppose those who wanted to follow these methods. Even Gandhiji after sufficient trial, came to the same conclusion and prescribed non-cooperation as the new method, accompanied by total non-violence. Azad had himself recommended this course in his writings in *Al Hilal* and so he at once fell in line with him, as a matter of practical policy. He did not believe in non-violence on principle. He declared as President of the Muslim League session in 1921 : "Unlike Mahatma Gandhi my belief is not that armed force should not be opposed by armed force. It is my belief that such opposing of violence with violence is fully in harmony with the natural laws of God and Islam permits the use of such violence. But at the same time, for purposes of liberation of India and the present agitation, I entirely agree with all the arguments of Mahatma Gandhi. It is my definite conviction that India cannot attain success by means of arms nor is it advisable to adopt that course." Lokmanya Tilak's position was the same.

From this time onwards, Azad had been a pillar of the Congress movement for political independence among other front rank leaders,

He enjoyed the confidence of the Swaraj Party group led by Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das and the Congress leaders who did not believe in Parliamentary activity. He did not identify himself with either group and held the view that both were patriotically advancing the best interests of the country. He was elected President of the special session of the Congress held in Delhi in 1923.

For five years till Simon Commission was appointed in 1928, the Swaraj Party's activities attracted the country's attention but it was proved once again that Parliamentary activity does not result in anything worth while in a slave country. The Commission was boycotted by the country because it was all-white. In 1929 Congress passed a resolution demanding complete independence *i.e.* separation from the British Empire. In 1930 the first Satyagraha movement against salt and forest laws was launched and most leaders were locked behind the bars. Azad was naturally among them. According to the practice followed by all no defence was offered, because sedition and law-breaking were considered a duty.

The Satyagraha campaign continued for over a year when Gandhi was released and Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy sent for him. There was a pact, other leaders were released and a round table conference was held in London to settle Indo-British relations. Gandhi ji attended the conference but having failed to secure 'substance of independence' he returned empty handed. There was much discontent in India at the failure of the round table conference. Yet the Government of India Act 1935 embodying what are known as the Hoare-Willingdon Reforms was passed. This measure provided only for provincial autonomy and a federal government at the centre, where power was retained in British hands. Yet Congress did not boycott the elections held under this Act 1937. Indeed it secured absolute majority in five major provinces and was the largest single party in four. It was only in the Punjab and Sind that it was minority party. Congress Party took office only after the Governors gave the assurance that they would be constitutional heads, Azad was a member of the Parliamentary Board with Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Patel which laid down the policies to be followed by the Congress ministries.

During the second world war years, the Cripps mission negotiations, the Cabinet mission negotiations till there was transfer of power to India and its partition into Pakistan and Bharat, Azad held the key position as president of the Indian National Congress to the Chagrin of the Muslim League which claimed the right of representing

all Muslims in India. The Nationalist Muslims led by Azad and the Congress disputed the claim. Azad's firm view is expressed in the following quotation from his presidential address to the Ramagarh Congress in 1940.

‘As a Mussalman I have a special interest in Islamic religion and culture and I cannot tolerate any interference with them. But in addition to these sentiments, I have others also which the realities and the conditions of life have forced upon me. The spirit of Islam does not come in the way of these sentiments. It only guides and helps me forward. I am proud of being an Indian. I am an essential element which has gone up to build India and I will never surrender this claim.”

Even after Pakistan was created in spite of him this is what he has to say in his autobiography published in 1958. “Can any one deny that the creation of Pakistan has not solved the communal problem, but made it more intense and harmful? The basis of partition was enmity between Hindus and Muslims. The creation of Pakistan gave it a permanent constitutional form and made it much more difficult of solution. The most regrettable feature of this situation is that the subcontinent of India is divided into two states which look at each other with hatred and fear.”

Since the attainment of independence, Azad was a member of the Nehru Cabinet. He enjoyed complete confidence of Nehru and belonged to his inner circle. When such a man deplored the partition of India, even after India and Pakistan had been in existence as to sovereign states for ten years, does he suggest that better counsels should still prevail and India and Pakistan should voluntarily unite and become one sovereign state?

## CHITTA RANJAN DAS

HAVE you heard of or known a person who once went into insolvency but when fortune again smiled on him, he repaid not only all his creditors but also those of his father ? The debts had become time-barred and there was no legal obligation of any kind to repay them but this man considered himself under a moral obligation to pay them to the last pie.

Who was he ? The late Deshabandhu Chitta Ranjan Das of revered memory not only in his native Bengal, but all over the country. He followed the unusual procedure of applying for the annulment of the insolvency order and paid back the entire amount of his and his father's debts.

This is only one of the instances of the magnanimity and largeheartedness which he invariably showed in his life. Another instance would be that in several cases of a political character that he conducted as a lawyer, he never charged any fees. In many cases he even paid his own fare and expenses, if he had to leave Calcutta and to places like Nagpur or Lahore. In the Manicktolla Bomb case, which was one of the most sensational political cases of this century he defended 36 young Bengalis who were on trial for conspiring and waging war against the King and for acquiring arms for that purpose.

The case lasted for a long time, more than 200 witnesses were examined, four thousand documents were filed and there were as many as five hundred exhibits—bombs, revolvers, detonators, ammunition etc. but Chitta Ranjan Das asked for no remuneration and put up with such heavy strain, not only on his purse but on his health. Before his death, he made over all his property to the nation for the institution of a medical school and a hospital for women.

The heart of India was touched by such acts of generosity and sacrifice and high-mindedness and his people began to call him lovingly and reverently the friend of the country-Deshabandhu. He was born in Calcutta on November 5, 1870 in a Brahmo family

of culture and distinction. His father Bhuban Mohan was a solicitor by profession and a journalist by preference. Das may be said to have inherited proficiency in law and active interest in journalism and letters from his father.

Educated at a missionary school in Calcutta and the Presidency College, he took his degree in Arts in 1890. Then he went to England to study law and compete for the Indian Civil Service. He was called to the Bar in 1892 but failed to secure a place among the successful candidates for the I.C.S. He distinguished himself as an effective speaker in England in Dadabhai Naoroji's campaign for a seat in Parliament and laid the foundations of his career as a politician.

Returning to India in 1893, Das began to practice as a barrister in the Calcutta High Court. Briefs were not very numerous to begin with as happens to every lawyer. Between 1893 and 1906, the chief events of his life were his marriage to Vasanti Devi in 1897 and the publication of the first two volumes of his poems in Bengali, known as *Malanch* and *Mala*. With the impact of Western learning on his young mind, *Malanch* bears traces of his intellectual revolt which led him to reject God and become an atheist but in his later poetical works such as *Kishore*, *Kishori* and *Antaryami*, he becomes highly emotional and devotional, true to his Vaishnava birth and tradition.

His many contributions to Bengali poetry and letters are somewhat eclipsed by his achievements as a patriot, but the bulk of his work is recognised as highly cultured and distinctive for the depth of feeling and thought. His very original poems are found to be in a collection known as *Sagar Sangit*. These have been translated by him and Aurobindo Ghose in English.

Literature and journalism were Deshabandhu Das's great interest next only to law which was his profession and politics which he made his religion after 1917 till his death. He kept in constant touch with important literary movements, organisations and personages in the country. He presided over the Bengal Literary Conference in 1915 when his presidential address was devoted to the discussion of Bengali lyric poetry. He was one of the founders and a member of the editorial board of *Bande Mataram* which was first edited by Aurobindo Ghose and later by Bipin Chandra Pal.



That was in 1905-6. His most important journalistic activity, however, was the founding and becoming editor-in-chief of the *Forward*, when the Swaraj Party was established. Subhas Chandra Bose and Sen Gupta were his chief assistants in the venture. It had a strong brilliant career before it ceased publication. Among his literary activities was the conducting of a Bengali monthly periodical known as *Narayan*. It was devoted to discussion of literary topics and Vaishnavism.

What brought Chitta Ranjan Das to prominent public notice was the sedition case against Aurobindo Ghose as editor of *Bande Mataram*. Das appeared as counsel for Ghose. That was in 1908 and Ghose was acquitted, Mr. Beacheroff, the Sessions Judge of Alipore agreeing with the unanimous opinion of the assessors. The counsel for Prosecution was Mr. Norton and for Defence Mr. C.R.Das. The former spoke 16 days and the later for eight days.

Das's address was described as a masterly specimen of forensic eloquence-nervous, compact, closely argued, with a touch of genuine passion which is an essential characteristic of great oratory. His peroration of the address was couched in the following words : "Long after this controversy is hushed to silence, long after the turmoil of this agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and as the lover of humanity. His words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but over distant seas and distant lands." He meant Aurobindo Ghose.

The Deshabandhu's interest in current politics was rather passive till 1917. He had figured as a delegate in the Calcutta Session of the Congress, held under Dadabhai Naoroji's presidentship in 1906, but he spoke on no resolution. He was only a silent but interested spectator. In 1917, he was invited to preside over the Bengal Provincial Conference and he accepted the honour. In the same year he gave evidence before the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Commission in which he demanded popular control of finance as well as all the services, leaving only the Army, Navy and Railways as reserved subjects for some time. He prominently figured in the Calcutta Session of the Congress in 1917 over which Mrs. Annie Besant presided. On the eve of this Congress he made a tour of Bengal and preached from several platforms that India had a right to develop her own political constitution according to her needs

and independently of the dictation from Whitehall, if the much vaunted slogan of self-determination had any meaning.

At the Congress Session of Amritsar in 1918, over which Pandit Moti Lal Nehru presided, Chitta Ranjan Das appeared as the protagonist of the view that the Montagu Chelmsford reforms were almost worthless and an immediate attempt must be made to secure full responsible government in the provinces and also at the Centre responsible government with certain reservations provisionally. His clash mainly was with Mrs. Besant who was out to support the Act as it was, and the Moderates who allied with her and later seceded from the Congress to form the Liberal Federation.

Das and Bipin Chandra misconstrued the positions of Tilak who on his way to Amritsar had sent a telegram to Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu saying, "Please convey to his Majesty grateful and loyal thanks of the Indian Home Rule League and the people of India for proclamation and amnesty and assure him responsive cooperation." But why met the misunderstanding melted away.

Das and Pal did not attach the necessary weight to the governing word responsive and so they thought that Tilak was out for cooperation with Government. But as soon as Tilak was in Amritsar, he explained this telegram satisfactorily to Das and Pal and then they formed a compact group as against Mrs. Besant who was for unconditional cooperation and for strengthening unconditionally Montagu's hands and Mahatma Gandhi who was also for unconditional cooperation.

Das was one of the speakers on the resolution on the Montagu Reforms. He firmly stood by the words in the resolution that the Reforms Act was "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing." Perhaps for the first time in India's recent history, he advocated the policy of pure obstruction after the Irish pattern to achieve home rule for India while speaking on this resolution. Before this he had worked on the Committee to go into the Punjab atrocities with Gandhi and Moti Lal Nehru and was completely alienated from the British. He was mentally prepared for non-cooperation and passive resistance and whatever other measures India thought feasible to use against the British rule for wresting home rule from their unwilling hands.

Soon after the Amritsar Congress Tilak died. Even he, a little before his death, was engaged in a heart-to-heart talks with Gandhi about the non-cooperation programme that he was propagating for the nation's acceptance. Within three months of his stand in favour

of unconditional cooperation, Gandhi had become a staunch non-cooperator because of Government's attitude. A special Session of the Congress was held at Calcutta in September 1920 to consider that programme. Tilak was dead on August 1, and far from having the opportunity to benefit by his advice the Congress was compelled to pass a condolence resolution on account of his death. Das felt that Tilak would have agreed with him in not agreeing with Gandhi who wanted boycott of not only colleges and courts but councils also. So, Das opposed Gandhi's resolution and a number of Congress leaders in Bengal and Maharashtra joined him. Yet the Session adopted Gandhi ji's programme by a large majority.

Three months later, at the Session of the Congress at the Nagpur (December, 1920) Chitta Ranjan Das and others entered into a pact with Gandhi that a year of free hand was to be given to him and his programme was to be unanimously voted. In pursuance of that policy, all those who had announced their candidature for election to the new Montford Councils withdrew their names. A number of people gave up their Government service, schools and colleges were boycotted by students and teachers, lawyer discontinued their practice. Men like Das and Nehru boycotted the courts, sacrificing their huge incomes. Das began to live the life of a recluse.

In order to pursue the Congress programme, Chitta Rajan organised a Congress Volunteer Corps. The programme of one crore volunteers and one crore of rupees called Tilak Swaraj Memorial fund, was raised. Picketing of Government offices and foreign goods shops, sale of Khaddar, picketing of liquor shops, was started in right earnest and all this led to unprecedented mass awakening.

Government arrested thousands of volunteers and it became impossible to accommodate them in existing jails. Chitta Ranjan himself, his wife and his sister were arrested. He was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He was elected President of the Congress Session of 1921 at Ahmedabad but as he was then an undertrial prisoner, he could not preside over it. While he was in jail, some Congress volunteers resorted to violence and so Mahatma Gandhi called off civil disobedience. Soon after he was put in jail. Chitta Ranjan was released in 1922 and after his release he began to advocate what he called non-cooperation from within, meaning the

Councils boycott should be lifted and Government should be fought by Congressmen from their seats in the Legislative Councils.

This eventually led to the formation of the Swaraj Party and the Congress itself recognised the party as its own body, Mahatma Gandhi having said that "The Parliamentary mentality has come to stay." The Swaraj Party was recognised as the Parliamentary wing of the Congress. Moti Lal Nehru led it in the Central Legislative Council. His was the largest single party in the Council, but he declined the invitation to form a ministry. The Ministers salaries were not voted in 1924 and 1925 and the Governor was compelled to certify them. The Calcutta Corporation was also filled by Swaraj, its and Subhas Chandra Bose himself was made the Municipal Commissioner. Das practically became a dictator in Bengal.

The struggle with Government was constant and continuous. It became even more intense after Gopinath Shah murdered an Englishman, mistaking him to be some high official. The Government promulgated an ordinance whereby some young persons were arrested on suspicion of a terrorist conspiracy. This number later increased to hundreds of people.

The ordinance was sought to be legalised in the Bengal Council. But that Bill was shown out. The Governor certified it. There was great indignation in the country. In such a situation, the Bengal Provincial Conference (1924) passed a resolution admiring Gopinath's patriotism and self-sacrifice, though it denounced his violence. Das spoke in support of the resolution. This was much misunderstood in India and England.

At such a juncture, at the Bengal Provincial Conference of 1925, Das declared that he was willing to negotiate for cooperation on honourable terms. He was willing to accept complete provincial autonomy as a starting step. This might have proved a turning point in Indian politics but his death on June 16, 1925 came in the way of further developments.

## VALLABHBHAI PATEL

IRON man of India is the commonly used and universally accepted epithet of Vallabhbhai Javerbhai Patel who died in 1950 as Home Minister of the Nehru Government. But he will be better remembered in history as the Bismarck of free India. His rise to all India fame was marked by the Bardoli episode in connection with which Mahatma Gandhi began to call him Sardar Patel. The title stuck to him as if it was part of his name and was officially recognised as such in Government documents. It will never be obliterated, therefore, from public memory.

One more assessment of Sardar Patel is available. It was made by Acharya Vinoba Bhave once while paying tribute to his services to India. Vinoba said with the help of a mathematical expression that Lokamanya Tilak minus his subtle intellect and scholarship was equal to Sardar Patel. This was a characteristic recognition of his other moral qualities and mental attributes which he shared with Lokamanya Tilak such as indomitable courage, dogged determination, spontaneous philanthropy, absence of jealousy and preparedness to sacrifice-all dedicated to one patriotic purpose.

Born of a poor Patidar stock on October 31, 1875 at Karamsad Vallabhbhai had his early education only in Gujarat. At the age of 17 he began to learn English and at 22 he passed the Matriculation examination. His domestic influences were pious and religious, but he soon threw them off and dropped all the rituals and fasts of the Swaminarayan cult. He passed the district pleader's examination and settled down in Borsad as a lawyer and specialised in criminal law practice. He relied more on his understanding of human nature, commonsense and extraordinary skill in cross-examination than on subtle knowledge and mastery over the details of this or that law. His one ambition was to earn the maximum amount of money in minimum time and proceed to England to become a barrister-at-law.

Accordingly he applied for a passport which was issued in the name of V.J. Patel. V.J. happened to be the initials of his elder brother and Vithalbhai Patel also. He was also a lawyer practising at

Borsad and he desired to qualify for the bar first. Vallabhbhai surrendered the passport in his brother's favour and agreed to go to England after his brother's return. He also undertook to meet Vithalbhai's expenses in England. Both the brothers were living separately at Borsad, but after Vithalbhai went to England, Patel asked his brother's wife to stay with him.

Vithalbhai's wife accepted the invitation but presumably to ensure her husband's safety abroad and early return she started feeding Brahmins and observing all manner of penances. Patel did not object to that but on account of temperamental differences, quarrels started between the two brothers' wives. Patel felt it would be wrong to reproach his sister-in-law during his brother's absence. He, therefore, sent his own wife to her parents till his brother returned. All this added to his expenses, but his practice was flourishing and he did not care about additional expenses.

Vallabhbhai was about 35 years of age when he returned from England in 1913 and began his practice in Ahmedabad where clients were, as it were, waiting for him ! He earned the reputation of being an intrepid advocate who did not spare even the judges when they were beside the point or did not strictly administer law. In the Ahmedabad municipality, and the Gujarat Sabha, he became a terror to European officers of high rank who were used to dominate over people like autocrats. He used to make sure of his ground in law and then his dealing with them was merciless and even overbearing. He frankly said that in the face of insolence and indifference he could not afford to be humble or gentle.

As an England-returned barrister, he assumed a stiff and even supercilious manner towards those who cringed and behaved like cowards. When Gandhi ji addressed a meeting of the Gujarat Club for the first time on his arrival from South Africa in connection with the activity he wanted to organise from his Ashram, Patel kept on playing bridge and did not even attend the meeting. This was in 1915. But when Gandhi ji first attracted the attention of all India by disobeying the order of the District Magistrate of Champaran where he had gone to plead for the cause of the exploited indigo plantation workers, Patel was drawn to him. He was much impressed by the dignified and firm statement that Gandhi ji made in the court after defying the order to leave Champaran. He was a party to the proposal to invite Gandhi ji to accept the presidentship of the Sabha and so

then they came very close to each other and as Rajgopalachari once said, Patel was to Gandhi ji what Lakshman was to Rama.

As in Tilak's life, the earlier years of Patel's public life were full of service to his fellowmen as in the plague, cholera and influenza epidemics and famine years. Out of the 'green' famine in Kheda district in 1917-18 arose the movement for non-payment of land revenue. Government would not listen to prayers for postponements and remissions after repeated efforts in which Gandhi ji took the lead. Satayagraha was at last resorted to and Government came to terms by asking only those who were able to pay and grant exemption to others. This compromise was accepted by Gandhi ji.

It was during this perfectly constitutional agitation that Gandhi ji came to see the true worth of Patel as an organiser and a leader. "If it were not for his assistance, I must admit that this campaign would not have been carried through so successfully" said Gandhi ji whose closest associate Patel became hereafter. He relinquished his prosperous practice at the bar and became a servant of the people. His other triumphs soon after were the strike of textile workers at Ahmedabad in 1918 which compelled millowners to accept the principle of arbitration. Soon followed the anti-Rowlatt Act Satyagraha in which Gandhi ji relied on Patel to conduct the cases of those who were proceeded against by Government but had nothing whatever to do with defiance of law.

During the non-cooperation movement in 1920, Patel became an all-India figure. It was in those days that Patel put, with his well-known brevity, in precise terms the attitude of India towards the British Empire. He said, "Whether we want to remain within the Empire or leave it, depends entirely upon the British and their intentions. We consider it desirable to remain within the Empire if we can, at the same time, enjoying complete independance, but if that is not possible, we shall, of course, be compelled to go out of the Empire." He lived long enough to see that India remained in the Empire *i.e.* the British Commonwealth of Nation as it is now called and was an independent, sovereign state too.

Patel had many triumphs to his credit in his conflicts with the British bureaucracy but the greatest and most significant was the heroic struggle of Bardoli in 1928. It was a no tax campaign in which the uneducated and unsophisticated peasantry of Bardoli reacted to the Sardar's lead in a manner and in a measure which was

a marvel. Government had increased the assessment on land which was enhanced contrary to the provisions of the Land Revenue Code. It was, moreover, altogether beyond the people's paying capacity. Petitions and representations were of no avail. The Government had ultimately to yield before the people's determination to put up with fines and confiscation of lands but the confiscated and auctioned lands, remained unrestored to their former owners till after a Congress Government had taken office in Bombay in 1937. The Government's defeat lay in the fact that the measure of enhancement became 6.5 per cent in place of 25 per cent according to the special court which adjudicated in the dispute.

Patel was elected President of the National Congress Session held at Karachi in 1931. His presidential address still remains the briefest in the history of the Congress but it was dynamic in its content and devastating in its aftermath viz. the civil disobedience campaign of 1931-32. The Repeated incarcerations and the rigours of jail life broke his health but never his spirit. For 16 months Patel and Gandhi were together in Yeravada jail. Gandhi described this period of companionship as one of the greatest joys of his life. Patel was released from Nasik where he was removed from Yeravada in July 1934 and in December the special Congress Session in Bombay was held. In this year the Socialist party in the Congress was formed. Patel did not look upon this development favourably. A large section of Congressmen was hereafter inclined to try the Parliamentary method and leading Congress men like Patel, Azad and Rajendra Prasad agreed to supervise their work. Patel was chairman of the Committee formed for that purpose. He guided the Parliamentary wing of the Congress till the Congress ministries in the Provinces resigned after the outbreak of the second world war.

During the Communal disorders that followed the partition of India, Patel was ruthless. He gave unqualified support to his officers in suppressing this threat to law and order. At the same time he followed a policy of sympathetic understanding towards the refugees in general and the Sikhs in particular. He won them over with conciliation and kind words. If the Sikh situation did not get out of control at that critical time, it was due to Patel's healing touch. His Amritsar speech at the height of the two-way migration will ever remain in public memory. It was a masterpiece of tact and sympathy. It was this twin policy of putting down disorders



and of conciliating those who had legitimate grievances that saved the situation in the country immediately after transfer of power from Britain to India.

For some time both Gandhi and Patel were not in favour of the Indian States people demanding responsible government in the states, because they had not built up their strength to make such a wholesale demand. They were taught to put up fights to get specific grievances redressed and to get specific demands conceded. But when the Government of India Act 1935 was passed whereby the Princes were to nominate one third of the Central Legislature, the states people everywhere began to question the right of the Princes to speak in their name and an all India agitation for responsible Government in all India states was set afoot. The Congress blessed this agitation and an all India States People's Congress was established. Congress leaders lent their support to people in Indian States. Patel was quite prominent among them. His position in this movement greatly helped him in dealing with the Princes after transfer of power. The Congress ministries had to resign in 1939 because India was drawn into the war without her consent merely by a Viceregal declaration. It was a denial of the right of self-determination to India and therefore a matter of principle. India also would have elected to join the Allies with Britain but she could not just be ordered to do so nor could her consent be taken for granted. Britain was not ready to give India satisfaction in this matter and the result was the 'Quit India' movement. Speaking on the 'Quit India' resolution at the A.I.C.C. on August 8, Patel neatly and precisely explained India's stand in the following words :—

“If America and England are thinking that they can fight their enemies from India without the cooperation of 40 millions of Indians, they are foolish. It must dawn on people that this war is a people's war and they should fight for their country's freedom. As long as this feeling is non-existent, no amount of war propaganda through the newspapers and the radio could rouse the people to supreme effort. For three years the Congress has been scrupulously adhering to its policy of non-embarrassment and has done nothing even under provocation. But this attitude was not appreciated and Britain thought that conditions would remain the same throughout. Now, the enemy is at our door and we cannot risk being idle any longer.”

India's earnestness was at last appreciated by the Churchill Government at the instance of President Roosevelt and led to the

Cripps mission. Sir Stafford Cripps came to India as the British Government's emissary to negotiate a scheme of Indo-British cooperation. His mission failed. But later came the Cabinet mission. As a result of its conference with the leaders of India, India at last became a free nation but it was partitioned into Pakistan and Bharat. Jawaharlal Nehru became India's Prime Minister and Patel took up the Home and States Ministry and was designated Deputy Prime Minister. He gave abundant proof of his grasp of administration as if he was a born administrator—so masterly was his handling of the intricate problems that India was faced with. In particular, the problem of five hundred odd Princely states with the bewildering variety of administrative traditions that were not helpful to the unification of the country would have baffled any one with a less stout heart than the Sardar's. Bismarck of Germany dealt with a similar but lesser problem and that too with the backing of the invincible Prussian armies. Patel achieved a decidedly greater feat and yet it is to his credit that he did it without rancour and bad blood, because he persuaded the Princely order of India to remain loyal to the Indian republic, even after its total eclipse. He did not bring about their cruel and heartless liquidation but afforded them opportunities to become equal and useful citizens with fellow Indians, by inducing them to fall in line with the current of democratic freedom.

Even this single achievement would have entitled Patel to the gratitude of present day Indians and their unborn generations. His swift action in Hyderabad evoked untold admiration of his countrymen because that was the greatest danger spot in free India with its Pakistani leanings, sub-terranean intrigues and a tradition of tyrannical rule. The same was true about Junagad in Saurashtra though the capacity for mischief in that small state was lesser than that of Hyderabad. Similarly his loyal support to the Prime Minister in his dealings with Kashmir is eloquent testimony of his farsighted statemanship and spirit of accommodation.

In the economic sphere, Patel was an advocate of gradualism and disliked revolutionary approaches. He yielded to none in his conviction that the prosperity of the country depended upon rapid industrialisation. He was often misrepresented as the friend of the capitalists who did not care for the interests of the poor workers and peasants. He came from a peasant stock and his heart was ever with the poor. But he was certain that dispossessing the rich would

not automatically elevate the poor. What he wanted was to level up the poor instead of levelling down the rich. He also was of the opinion that nationalisation of industries had no meaning so long as the Government did not have a trained and specialised personnel to run those industries. Mere nationalisation without the necessary manpower would be a leap in the dark. He was, therefore, in favour of a kind of industrial truce till India made sufficient industrial advance. He did not object to what is now described as the socialistic pattern of society to come in the fullness of time. He hated mere slogan-mongering. In practice, the Nehru Government has been following the same policy.

It is India's great misfortune that the Nehru-Patel combination lasted for only 40 months after freedom, because of Patel's demise in 1950. They were such wonderful complements of each other and no one knows it better than Jawaharlal Nehru himself. After Patel's death, Nehru must have felt quite often that he was crippled for want of this august Colleague and Counsellor.

## JAMNALAL BAJAJ

A NEW epoch in modern India's history began with the return of Mahatma Gandhi to India from South Africa, early in 1915. Gandhiji had become a well-known figure in India even before then, because of the crusade he had led in South Africa on behalf of the Indians in that country. Between 1915 and 1920, Gandhiji came to be recognized as the coming man of India by his Satyagraha campaigns in Kheda and Champaran. He took an active part in the deliberations of the Indian National Congress session at Amritsar, in December 1919, and every one who mattered in Indian public life came to know that a new force was making itself felt in the movement for India's deliverance from political thralldom.

Among those who were attracted to Gandhiji, became intimately associated with him and gained his confidence most, was Jamnalal Bajaj. Young Jamnalal had watched Lokamanya Tilak's campaign for Home Rule and also helped it by contributing generously to a purse of Rs. 15,000 that was presented to him on behalf of the Marwadis of Bombay. But the contact with Tilak did not develop much further. When Gandhiji came on the scene, it was a case of complete surrender on the part of Jamnalal. At the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1920, he adopted Gandhiji as his "father" and became his "fifth son".

There was perhaps none else who so completely identified himself with Gandhiji in all his activities as Jamnalal Bajaj. His contribution even in any one field of work—political, social or constructive—would have been enough to secure for him an honoured place in India's freedom movement. What transcended all these contributions was, however, his spiritual endeavour, about which not much is known to the people, because public attention was focussed more on the fight for political freedom in which the country was engaged in those hectic days.

As has been pointed out by Kakasaheb Kalekar in the introduction written by him to the book *A Gandhian Capitalist*, which is a collection of letters between Gandhiji and Jamnalal Bajaj,

"Jamnalalji was a Sadhaka, a spiritual aspirant. Early in life, long before he met Gandhiji he had started on the quest for a Guru for the fulfilment of his aspirations. When he met Gandhiji he knew that his quest had ended and he completely surrendered himself to his spiritual father. Under his guidance he started his experiments in self-purification which continued throughout his lifetime. It was during the closing months of his life that he reached a spiritual crisis, which culminated in a befitting and noble end to a life well spent in the service of humanity."

Gandhiji always thought of and cited Jamnalal Bajaj as one coming very near to his ideal of trusteeship. Jamnalal did earn lakhs like many other businessmen and industrialists but he regarded himself as a trustee of his wealth and he expected his heirs and successors to do likewise. He would have gladly given up further acquisition of money after he had surrendered himself to Gandhiji, but Gandhiji himself prevented him from doing so, because he was convinced that Jamnalal's ways were clean and honest, and moreover, the money so earned was spent in philanthropic causes, in the service of humanity. He thus came up to the standard and stood the test laid down not only by Gandhiji but also by Tukaram, the devout poet-saint of Maharashtra who was also a Bania and advised fellow Banias in one of his abhangas to earn by honest means and spend munificently, discriminatingly and resolutely for the good of others.

About the theory of trusteeship, Gandhiji himself wrote, "It is no makeshift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. No other theory is compatible with non-violence. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it; that possessors of wealth have not acted up to the theory does not prove the falsity of it; it only proves the weakness of the wealthy." "Jamnalal, by his personal example, was the first to demonstrate that, though a capitalist by all means, he could overcome this weakness and become a capitalist of the Gandhian pattern. The House of Tatas, which is making profits of crores of rupees every year, has shown that, like an individual even a corporation can act in the spirit of trusteeship of the Gandhian pattern, since eighty-five per cent of its profits are spent by this house in charities and public services. If this becomes the general practice with industrial and commercial houses, Gandhiji's theory will have materialised in practice.

Like his master Gandhiji, Jamnalal had no liking for politics but was forced into it by circumstances. He participated in the

non co-operation and Satyagraha movements and went to jail. He also led the agitation for democratisation of the princely States and establishment of responsible government therein. But dearest to his heart was constructive work, propagation of Khaddar and other village industries, popularization of Hindustani, uplift and education of women, social reforms like widow marriages, abolition of purdah, intercommunal unity and service of Harijans.

How many people know or remember that one of the earliest donations of Jamnalal, who knew very little of science, was towards the establishment of a research laboratory of the celebrated Indian botanist and biologist, Jagadish Chandra Bose ?

It would be appropriate to point out here, that Jamnalal, although he did not have the conventional education and called himself an "uneducated Jat," had a keen sense of proprieties and a subtle understanding of the shades of meanings of words. He objected to the term Go-raksha (cow protection), because he thought that it smacked of patronage and also implied a spirit of antagonism to those who killed the cow; so he suggested the word Go-seva (service of the cow) instead of Go-raksha. Gandhiji accepted the suggestion at once.

At Gandhiji's behest, Jamnalal in his closing days devoted himself entirely to Go-seva work. He shifted from his house at Wardha to a simple thatched hut built at a cost of only Rs. 250. Its floor was unpaved and uneven. It was bare of all furniture except for a low rough cot for sitting and sleeping. He stayed here among the dumb cattle, leading a life of austerity and hardship. He was quite happy and contented in the midst of these surroundings. A few months later he had a sudden attack of haemorrhage which proved fatal. He passed away on February 11, 1942. He was born on November 4, 1889, so that he was 53 when he died. Jamnalal was essentially a businessman, but even in doing business he followed the Gandhian way. He had laid down certain principles in the form of maxims which he himself scrupulously adhered to and wanted fellow businessmen also to follow. Here are the maxims :—

1 Do not affix your signature on any paper, before you have read it.

2. Do not take any monetary risks, in the hope that you will make only profits.

3. Do not hesitate to say 'no'. Every one who wishes for success in life should have in him the strength to convince others of the truth of what he says.

4. Be cautious while dealing with unacquainted persons ; this is not to say that you should treat them with suspicion.

5. Always be clean, truthful and stainless in your business affairs, and keep a record of everything.

6. Before you stand surety for any person, know him well.

7. Keep a strict account of every pie.

8. Be strictly punctual and keep your engagements without fail.

9. Do not hold out hopes of doing more than you can really do.

10. Be truthful, but not because it pays you to do so.

11. Whatever you wish to do, do it today.

12. Think only of success, speak only of success, and you will see that you succeed.

13. Have faith in the power of your body and soul.

14. Do not ever be ashamed of hard work.

15. Never fight shy of plain speaking.

There was complete accord between what Jamnalal preached and practised ; he strictly conformed to all these principles.

As a businessman, Jamnalal was exemplary. To his *munims* his strict instructions were not to maintain any false account books in order to avoid paying income-tax and also never to offer a bribe to any Government employee. Yet, while he was in jail during the Nagpur Flag Satayagrah, one of his *munims* acted contrary to his instructions.

There were extraordinary profits in the cotton business during that year and so the assessment of income-tax would have been considerable. He did not show correct accounts to the Income tax officer and expected that about Rs. 7,000 would be demanded. The officer knew about the unusual profits and he arbitrarily assessed Rs. 85,000. The munim offered a bribe of Rs. 10,000 and got the assessment fixed at Rs. 8,000.

After Jamnalal came back from jail he came to know of this. He was extremely hurt. He severely reprimanded the *munim* and

gathering all his staff together gave the warning that such a thing must not happen again. The same day he left for Sabarmati. He placed all the facts before Gandhiji and asked him how he could atone for such deceitful behaviour on the part of his employee.

Gandhiji advised him that the money which the *munim* had saved should be given over for public work so that he would be convinced that Jamnalal did not wish to retain with him any money so earned and would, therefore, never again try to make profits by improper methods.

How strictness was tempered with kindness in Jamnalal's character may be illustrated by another story. Once a relative of his borrowed money from him for his marriage. Jamnalal knew that he would not be able to repay it. So he wanted to make a gift of the amount. But the borrower insisted that it must be regarded as a loan and so accounted in the books.

Three years passed and the loan was not even partially repaid. Jamnalal filed a suit for its recovery. The relative came to Jamnalal and began to fret and fume, but the suit was not withdrawn. Jamnalal obtained a decree against the borrower but never got it executed. He had already written off the amount.

When some one asked him why he had taken the trouble to go to court if that was his intention, his reply was: "We must always differentiate between friendship and business. My relative's conduct was altogether unbusinesslike. I wanted to teach him a lesson. If I had not gone to court, it would have meant that I was afraid of his abuses. I did not want such an impression to be left. Yet I did not want to persecute him and so I wrote off the amount after securing a decree against him."

It is true that Jamnalal and Gandhiji were quite kindred souls and devoted to what Gandhiji called the constructive programme. Both were not interested in politics but they had to participate in it. Jamnalal's public work was a matter of his own choice; it only grew manifold because of Gandhiji's association.

He wanted Gandhiji to adopt him as his fifth son for his spiritual uplift. He wanted Gandhiji to exercise paternal authority over him and what is remarkable is, that Gandhiji yielded to Jamnalal's desire.



This mutually voluntary adoption took place in 1920 at the time of the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress which changed the whole course of the national struggle for freedom as well as the course of the life of Jamnalal Bajaj. The first adoption of Jamnalal in the family of Seth Bachhraj was legal and made without the knowledge and consent of the adoptee but this new adoption was moral and of great consequence to the lives of the two parties to the adoption.

When Jamnalal was arrested in connection with the flag Satyagraha in Nagpur on June 21, 1923, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari who was then editor of *Young India* wrote : "No one had tasted like Jamnalalji the sweets of domestic happiness, wealth, position, influence and what is coveted by men more than anything else — friendship with the great and the powerful ; in short everything that makes for abstinence from the sufferings and privations involved in the great enterprise initiated by Mahatmaji. Yet in a moment he changed his life completely and spurning all ease and pleasures that could be purchased by his wealth and the power and influence that lay at his feet he plunged into the fight like the humblest worker. Who can say our nation has not risen in stature ?"

## DR. ANNIE BESANT

As of the late Mr. B.G. Horniman, India was the late Dr. Mrs. Besant's country by adoption for whose uplift and progress, she strove incessantly for over 40 years. On November 16, 1893, she set foot on Indian soil for the first time, landing at Tuticorin. She had spent over 45 years of her life in England and had already made a reputation for herself as a versatile servant of humanity.

Mrs. Besant was a militant free-thinker, a crusading journalist, a brilliant pamphleteer and an explosive speaker. Bernard Shaw once described her as "the greatest orator in England and possibly in Europe." She was a divorcee, a fearless advocate of birth control by artificial means and an ardent social reformer. Above all, she was like her colleague in every activity, Charles Bradlaugh, an atheist. While Bradlaugh died an atheist, Mrs. Besant lived long enough to revise her views and became a Theosophist and a Theist.

Dr. Besant came to India as a Theosophist and believed in working for rousing India's soul. Preaching of Theosophy, which is an attempt to synthesize all religious creeds, was considered by her as the best beginning to awaken Indians to their great past. For 20 years she devoted herself to this work by starting theosophical centres in various places and preaching from the pulpit.

Lokamanya Tilak, though not a Theosophist himself, was a partisan of this organisation and handsomely acknowledged Mrs. Besant's services to Hinduism. Writing in the *Kesari* on March, 29, 1904, Tilak said, 'Theosophy is not an independent religion. Theosophy preaches that Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians, Jains and Buddhists should conduct themselves according to their beliefs in every-day life but should recognise the fundamentals of all religions to be the same and live in peace with one another. Theosophy does not ask any person to give up his or her ancestral faith. It is an institution of well meaning, benevolently minded persons which preaches brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God.

"Although the Central Hindu College at Banaras is mainly run by Theosophists it must be remembered that it is not a Theosophist

College but a Hindu College. Mrs. Besant, though a Theosophist, is a Hindu by religion because she has adopted it. She is fully qualified to expound Hinduism to Hindus. Hinduism has been flourishing for thousands of years while Theosophy is a very recent creed; yet the service Theosophists have rendered to Hinduism by presenting its fundamental tenets in a new and attractive garb is such as we should be grateful for. It should be remembered that Theosophy has been instrumental in reclaiming many who had turned their backs against Hinduism and were looking for inspiration elsewhere."

That was Mrs. Besant's cultural service to India in general and Hindus in particular. But ever since she decided to adopt India as her motherland, she was fired by the one thought that India must come into her own, must become politically free to do her duty by the world. She wrote a book called *England, India and Afganistan* in 1879 in which she clearly stated the problem of India as she saw it. She said, "Few records of conquest show stains so foul as the story of the subjugation of Hindustan by this originally merchant association, (East India Company). What is our duty to this great land and how may we best remedy our crimes in the past? The answer comes in one word: Liberty. The work cannot be done in a day, but it must be begun by slow stages. Let a system of representative government gradually replace the centralised despotism of our present sway."

All the same, Dr. Besant did not take any active part in the public and political life of India for the first 20 years that she was here. She devoted herself to religious, social and educational work only. Her active political work began with the publication of the *Commonweal* with the beginning of 1914, which was a weekly English newspaper run on the lines of the *Nation* or the *New Statesman* in England. In April and May of that year she was in England. The first world war had not yet begun when in her Queen's Hall lectures she propounded the thesis that the reward for India's loyalty to England was her freedom from British domination.

On return to India in the middle of July she bought over the *Madras Standard* which was founded in 1841 and changed its name to *New India*. Under her editorship, it became a vigorous champion of India's freedom and popularised the cause of home rule for India through all parts of the country.

Mrs. Besant saw that since the split at Surat, the Indian National Congress had become only a rump and was not respected

either by the people or by the Government. She regretted that it met only for four days in the year during the Christmas holidays, passed excellently worded resolutions and then practically went to sleep.

It was left only to enthusiastic individuals to carry on Congress work on their own and that was the best arrangement according to men like Pherozechah Mehta and Dinshaw Wacha, who dominated the Congress Organisation in those days.

Mrs. Besant desired that the Congress should be a well-knit organisation, working all the year round, under the direction of a strong executive, with a permanent subordinate staff under it. She wanted the vigorous and militant followers of Lokmanya Tilak to return to the Congress for she knew that Tilak held similar views for many years and was exerting his best to have them adopted by the Congress. She made up her mind to bring him and his followers back to the Congress.

To that end she opened negotiations with Gokhale and Tilak and it seemed that the 1914 Session of the Congress at Madras itself would bring about the get-together of the Moderates and Militants, but Pherozechah Mehta and under his guidance Gokhale did not allow its materialisation at Madras.

In 1915 both Mehta and Gokhale died and in 1916, the union of the two wings of the Congress took place at Lucknow for which Mrs. Besant was incessantly striving.

A little later the Home Rule Leagues were also established in all important centres of India and Tilak and Besant were working hand in hand. In 1915, Mrs. Besant published two important works : *India a Nation* and *How India Wrought for freedom*. The latter was an annotated history of the Congress of 30 years of its existence.

Early in 1916 Mahatma Gandhi, who had come to India a year before was requested by Mrs. Besant to join the Home Rule league but he declined on the ground that as a loyal citizen of the British Empire, he did not want to embarrass the British Government in their hour of distress by India's selfish demands. He would rather wait and see what the Government was going to do for India voluntarily. Besant and Tilak however, thought it was quite consistent with their feelings of loyalty to regard Britain's adversity as India's opportunity and strike while the iron was hot.

Government, however, considered such attitude as hostile and even seditious and all kinds of restrictions, were sought to be imposed on the movements of Tilak and Besant and their lieutenants and mouthpieces.

While Tilak escaped being held guilty of sedition for the third time in his life, for some speeches on home rule because of the Bombay High Court decision on appeal, Mrs. Besant had to pay heavy security for the publication of *New India*. She was interned at Ootacamund, with her colleagues B.P. Wadia and G S. Arundel.

In all she paid Rs. 4000 as security. In order to continue the *New India* in her absence, P.K. Telang became its editor and N C. Kelkar from Poona and B.G. Horniman from Bombay went to Madras for some time to help him. The Governments of Bombay and the Central Provinces passed orders against Mrs. Besant, prohibiting her entry within their limits.

All this only helped Mrs. Besant in making her movement more popular. She was not content to confine her propaganda only to India. She started a branch in England. Among those who joined were George Lansbury, Graham Pole, Philip Snowden and Bernard Shaw.

When she was interned in Madras, a number of Indian celebrities who had hitherto not become members but were quite sympathetic joined in their hundreds. Men like Tej Bahadur Sapru, M A. Jinnah, M.R. Jayakar, Sarojini Naidu and others were among them. Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru had already joined.

On August 20, 1917 came the famous announcement of E S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India saying, "The policy of his Majesty's Government with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

It was also announced that immediate steps to that end would be taken and that the Secretary of State would tour India and meet leaders of public opinion. In such a climate, it was incongruous to keep Mrs. Besant interned and so Sapru, Sastri, Jinnah and the whole country protested against it.

Dr. Subramanya Aiyar who was President of the Madras Home Rule League wrote to President Wilson drawing his attention to

Mrs. Besant's detention without trial. President Wilson asked Prime Minister Lloyd George what it meant and as a consequence of all this Mrs. Besant and her two colleagues were released.

As soon as she was free she toured round the whole country addressing meetings and calling on leading men everywhere to enroll their support for presenting a common political demand to the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. The Congress Session was approaching and Tilak suggested her name as President of the Calcutta Congress. This suggestion was unanimously approved and she was elected to preside over it.

In her presidential address, Mrs. Besant called upon the British Government to take immediate steps towards the freedom of India and declared that her year of office would be one of work all the year round and selected C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar as the Secretary of the Congress.

When Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford began their round of visits to all Provinces and received deputations of political bodies of all shades of opinion, Montagu had a private, unscheduled talk with Mrs. Besant in which she frankly put forward the plea for an immediate equal status for India in the Empire with England and the other self-governing dominions.

When the Montford proposals were published, Mrs. Besant criticised them as "unworthy of England to offer and unworthy of India to accept." But her subsequent attitude to the Reform proposals as they were examined by a Parliamentary Committee had afterwards showed that she did not mean to reject them outright but work them for what they were worth and strive for an early progressive revision.

Yet it was later found, particularly when the deputations of various political parties including that of the Moderates were in England to appear before the Joint Parliamentary Committee that the Moderates led by Surendranath Banerjea and Bhupendranath Basu were committed to support the official proposals of Montagu and Mrs. Besant chose to join hands with them.

From the time of the special session of the Congress in August, 1918 over which Syed Hassan Imam presided and of which Vithalbhai Patel was Chairman, it became obvious that Mrs. Besant was allying herself with the Moderates and that she did not quite

agree with the official Congress view that the Montford Reform proposals were "Inadequate, unacceptable and disappointing."

The Moderates had almost come to the conclusion of leaving the Congress and starting their own National Liberal Federation. While in England the Congress deputation led by Tilak and Vithalbhai Patel stuck to the Congress demand as formulated at the Delhi Congress 1919, the Moderates and Mrs. Besant decided to stand by the frame-work of Montagu and suggest amendments, if at all, within that framework. The British Congress Committee and *India*, its mouthpiece, would not support its parent, the Congress, but chose to support the Moderates and Mrs. Besant who had allied with them

At last, the British Congress Committee was reconstituted ; a constitution for it was framed and *India*, was taken over from its editor and made over to Mr. N.C. Kelkar who was there as a member of the Home Rule League. Miss Helena Normanton and Mr. Besant carried on a raging and tearing campaign against Patel and Khaparde in her newly started *United India* and elsewhere in England and Tilak himself had to complain about her attitude to the President of the Congress and in public statements.

Yet when the Montford Reforms Act was passed, she remained its staunch supporter and in the midst of the non-cooperation movement. She faced unpopularity by standing by the Act and the Moderates who wanted to give it a fair trial. She continued this work through the twenties of this century courageously till she breathed her last.

She never hesitated to do what she conscientiously considered right and never swerved from it. She considered Mahatma Gandhi's non co-operation movement as destructive and as not calculated to serve the best interests of the country and openly opposed it.

## MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

MAHATMA GANDHI has been rightly recognised as the man of 'the age' all over the world. Perhaps there is no other person about whom and about whose doings more has been written and spoken. About 20 years ago I wrote an article about Gandhiji when I had occasion to come across some calculation in this behalf by an American writer. He said that six thousand million words were till then written about Gandhiji in the English language only. This account was made by somebody soon after the Bardoli debacle.

Now, it is over forty years since the statistics were collected. If somebody chooses to indulge again in such an effort, he will reach an astronomical figure and it may be that it will be something like an effort of counting the grains of sands on a beach. And it is certainly not necessary to establish the greatness of this Universalist, Humanitarian and Father of the Indian nation because it is wholly superfluous. Who ever has questioned his title as the greatest man of the world and the man of our age ?

Like all great and good men who guide the footsteps of humanity to an ideal, to a better understanding of the purpose of life on this earth, Gandhiji did not have the good fortune to be properly understood. Was it not the fate of Christ and Buddha also ? Gandhiji had already made some name as an extraordinary person who had tried extraordinary means to impress and win over the South Africa Government by what was then called passive resistance to unjust persecution of the Indians who had gone to South Africa.

In 1915, Gandhiji returned to India after serving nearly 25 years the cause of Indians in South Africa. According to the behest of Gokhale whom he ever recognised as his political master, he spent a year studying the situation in India and keeping strictly a vow of silence. Gokhale died in February 1915, and Gandhi was left to himself. While in South Africa Gandhi had completely formulated his philosophy of life and work and attitude towards affairs of the world. *Indian Home Rule* or *Hind Swaraj* is the



name of the little book that he wrote then. Although it went through several editions till the time of his death, he did not see the necessity of revising it in the least. It is the quintessence of all his thinking, writing and doing in later years.

Though Gokhale was his political master, Gandhi had already outgrown the master. A flash of it was already seen when Gandhi decided to disobey him in the matter of satyagraha in South Africa at the cost of displeasing Gokhale and Lord Hardinge who had wholly identified himself with the cause of Indians in South Africa. Gokhale had to yield and keep supporting him. That occasion probably made Gokhale feel that he could no longer think of Gandhi as his successor in the presidentship of the Servants of India Society. As future events showed, it was good for the Society and Gandhi and the other Servants including Srinivasa Sastri that Gandhi withdrew his application for membership and relieved the members of the Servants of Indian Society of the unpleasant task of rejecting it.

Whatever that may be, Gokhale who had known Gandhi since 1896 knew his full worth and had completely sized him up. Speaking in support of a resolution at the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress in 1909, pledging support to the cause of Indians in South Africa, Gokhale used the following words while referring to Gandhi.

“It is one of the privileges of my life that I know Mr. Gandhi intimately and I can tell you that a purer, a nobler, a braver, a more exalted spirit has never moved on this earth. Mr. Gandhi is one of those men who living an austere simple life themselves and devoted to all the highest principles of love to their fellow-beings and truth and justice, touch the eyes of their weaker brethren as with magic and give a new vision. He is a man who may be described as a man among men, a hero among heroes, a patriot among patriots and we may well say that in him, Indian humanity at the present time has really reached its high water-mark.”

Let it be noted that this was said as far back as in 1909 when it was still six years after which he was to come to India and take it on himself to train Indians in non-violence and Satyagraha as the best methods of not only achieving political freedom but socio-economic uplift and human equality. Yet what he was to do from 1916 onwards and more particularly after 1920 with the starting of

the non-cooperation movement is all implicit and slightly explicit in a message that he sent to this Lahore Congress session. It is somewhat lengthy but worth quoting :

"I do not know that I am at all competent to send any message. At the present moment, I am unable to think of anything but the task immediately before me. *viz.*, the struggle that is going on in Transvaal. I hope our countrymen throughout India realize that it is national in its aim in that it has been undertaken to save India's honour. I may be wrong but I have not hesitated publicly to remark that it is the greatest struggle of modern times, because it is the purest as well in its goal as in its methods. Violence in any shape or form is entirely eschewed. The Satyagrahis believe that self-suffering is the only true and effective means to procure lasting reforms. They hold that loyalty to an earthly sovereign or an earthly constitution is subordinate to loyalty to God and his constitution. I venture to suggest that a struggle such as this is worthy of occupying the best, if not the exclusive, attention of the Congress. If it be not impertinent, I would like to distinguish between this and other items on the programme of the Congress. The opposition to the laws or the policy with which the other items deal does not involve any material suffering. The Congress activity consists in a mental attitude without corresponding action. May I also suggest that in pondering over and concentrating our attention upon passive resistance, we would perchance find out that for the many ills we suffer from in India, passive resistance is an infallible panacea. It is worthy of careful study and I am sure it will be found that it is the only weapon that is suited to the genius of our people and our land which is the nursery of the most ancient religions and has very little to learn from modern civilization—a civilization based on violence of the blackest type, largely a negation of the Divine in Man and which is rushing headlong to its ruin."

His early struggles in India in Champaran, and Kheda on the well-formulated Satyagraha principles, his success with Lord Chelmsford in having suspended the Indian Indenture Labour system in Fiji, his espousal of the cause of the Ahmedabad textile labour against the Ahmedabad millowners were watched by Tilak and he realised that Gandhi was the coming man in India and he had agreed that his method had "great possibilities." Tilak may even be said to have made up his mind to let Gandhi take charge of the political freedom movement and work as his collaborator or content himself with giving him only advice and counsel.

But other nationalist leaders like Bepin Chandra Pal, for instance, were not reconciled to this position. The emergence of Swaraj Party later after most of them had joined the non-cooperation movement and found it wanting also showed that they had not entirely fallen in line with Gandhi. He also let them have their innings by calling the Swaraj Party as the Parliamentary wing of the Congress. What Bepin Chandra Pal said in the early days of the non-cooperation movement is notable. Pal did not consider Gandhi a politician at all. He was in those days running a weekly English journal called *Democrat* which was founded by Shamlal Nehru. He wrote, "Gandhi is an apostle of Ahimsa, a founder of a new religion and everything pales into insignificance in Gandhi's view before Ahimsa." Gandhi himself had given cause for such comment being made by declaring, "I have recognised that the nation has a right, if it so wills, to vindicate her freedom even by actual violence. Only, then India ceases to be the land of my love, though she be the land of my birth, even as I should take no pride in my mother, if she went astray."

Pal wanted to condemn Gandhi by pointing out that he was first an apostle of non-violence and only secondarily a patriot. What however, was said to condemn, was but the bare truth Gandhi never disowned, but it is notable that Gandhi disputed nobody's right to be free by whatever means and vindicate it by whatever efforts. He was also aware that under the cloak of non-violence, cowardice attempted to parade in the case of many. So he made the clear distinction between cowardice and violent bravery and declared there can be bravery of the non-violent as well as the violent. He similarly pointed out that bravery must not be confounded with cruelty. Killing can be by the brave as by the mere cruel. In the latter case it is murder, which is considered a penal offence everywhere.

Gandhi did not deny that he was a universalist and believed in the brotherhood of mankind, but he deliberately chose to work in India and make all his experiments of Ahimsa and truth on the Indian soil, because he was a patriot also. Patriotism for him was a smaller concentric circle within the bigger concentric circle of Universalism. His method of Satyagraha for solving problems was not restricted to India or his countrymen but intended to be a method that he wanted the whole world to follow. His message of conversion by persuasion and suffering on account of the opponent

is being preached and brought into action by his disciple, Vinoba, after him and he is proving that Gandhism is not a rigid creed or dogma. It is a developing philosophy, calculated to bring about the good of the total humanity.

Gandhi's way is being followed notably in America by the Negro movement to attain equal citizenship with the whites in every respect which has really been verbally guaranteed by the American constitution but does not exist in fact. By following the satyagraha method in a non-violent way, the Negroes are achieving one success after another. In his own life-time Gandhiji was invited by Negro leaders to go to their aid and lead them. But the reply Gandhiji gave is characteristic. He said that he had yet to prove beyond doubt the validity of his method in his own country. Before he was satisfied that he had done it, he could not be presumptuous enough to go to America and preach it or try it. But he welcomed the fellow experimenters in his method.

That was Gandhi's way in India also. When Gokhale told him to stay in Poona in the Servants of India Society, he said he would like to go to Ahmedabad and work in Gujarat and win the confidence of his own people first. Gokhale agreed and the Sabarmati Ashram was founded and initially all its expenses were also defrayed by the Servants of Indian Society. In Ahmedabad Gandhi's first success was the reconciliation he brought about between the textile workers and the mill-owners. Arbitration over disputes has been the method that is followed there ever since. His career since then till he died is fresh enough and need not be the subject of a small sketch.

Few people presumably know or remember that Mahatma Gandhi was once proceeded against for Contempt of Court, held guilty and let off with "a severe reprimand." That was way back in 1919, after he had taken over *Young India* from Jamnadas Dwarkadas and begun to run it from Ahmedabad. Gandhiji was thrice hauled up in Court. On the first occasion, he had disobeyed the order of a District Magistrate in Bihar. He pleaded guilty and appeared in court to receive his sentence, but the case against him was unconditionally withdrawn! The second occasion arose when he was accused of contempt of court and on the third occasion he was hauled up for sedition. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to six years imprisonment, the District Magistrate quoting the precedent of Tilak for that purpose.

In the contempt proceedings, Gandhiji did not plead guilty, but defended himself refused to sign the apology dictated by Court as inconsistent with his conscience and was prepared to receive any punishment that could be given to him in law. This was the time when Gandhiji had lost faith in his Imperial idealism. So many events had 'estranged me completely from Government and disabled me from tendering, as I have hitherto whole-heartedly tendered, my loyal cooperation'. He had prepared a satyagraha pledge as a protest against the passing of the Rowlatt Bills and made a general appeal to self-respecting Indians to sign it.

Among those who took the satyagraha pledge were some Ahmedabad lawyers practising in the Court of the District Judge of Ahmedabad, Mr. B.C. Kennedy. He demanded a satisfactory explanation of their conduct from them and not being satisfied with it, he addressed a letter to the Registrar of the High Court as to how the saytagrahi lawyers should be dealt with. The copy of this letter reached Gandhiji's hands who decided to publish this letter of Mr. Kennedy in *Young India*, because in his opinion, the District Judge had exceeded the legitimate bounds of his position as a Judge in expressing opinions about the Satyagraha movement and the satyagrahi lawyers. On August 6, 1919, this letter was published in *Young India* under the title 'O' Dwyerism in Ahmedabad.' Gandhiji also published editorial comments under the caption "Shaking Civil Resisters", in which Mr. Kennedy was severely criticised.

Since all this was published while proceedings against the lawyers were in progress, Gandhiji as editor and Mahadeo Dasai as printer and publisher of *Young India* were proceeded against for contempt of Court. The trial took place on March 3, 1920 before a High Court Bench consisting of Chief Justice Sir Amberson Marten, and Justice Hayward and Kajji. Gandhiji disclaimed any intention to lower the dignity of the court and said that as a journalist, he had performed a legitimate public duty. He refused to apologise because he said he did not realise that he had done anything wrong. During the course of the trial, Gandhiji said, "If a son brought a suit against his father and if a journalist thought that his action was wrong, the journalist would be justified in holding the son up to public ridicule notwithstanding the fact that the suit was still undecided." Their Lordships considered all this untenable and held Gandhiji and Mahadeo Dasai guilty of contempt of court.

Sir Amberson Marten delivered the judgment, as stated at the beginning. Justice Hayward said that the law had certainly been broken but 'the respondents seem to have posed not as law-breakers, but rather as passive resisters of the law.'

After the judgment was pronounced Gandhiji returned to the subject again and stated that he had refused to accept the friendly advice from everywhere to tender an apology, not because he was obstinate, but because he thought that there was a great principle at stake. 'I had to conserve a journalist's independence and yet respect the law. My own reading of the law was that no contempt was committed by me. But my defence rested more upon the fact that I could not offer an apology if I was not prepared not to repeat the offence on a similar occasion. Because I hold that an apology tendered to a court, to be true, has to be as sincere as a private apology.'

Gandhiji added, "The luminous judgment of Justice Marten lays down the law and decides against me. But I feel thankful that it does not question the propriety of my action. Justice Hayward's judgment recognises it as an instance of passive resistance and practically makes it the reason for not awarding any sentence. Here then we have an almost complete vindication of civil disobedience."

## NARASINHA CHINTAMAN KELKAR

Among those who came under the influence of the band of the intrepid and independently minded patriots in Maharashtra who started the New English school and the Fergusson College as also the newspapers *Kesari* and *Mahratta* in the eighties of the last century, Narasinha Chintaman Kelkar would have to be given the prime place. Among his teachers at the Fergusson College were Tilak, Agarkar and Apte and the first inspiration for public service and social work was drawn by him from them when he heard their lectures in his first year in college.

Little must Kelkar have thought that a few years later, he was to be the right hand man and confidante of Tilak and the successor to Tilak's newspapers as editor and still later chief trustee of the Kesari-Mahratta institution which for the last eighty years and more has kept up a continuity of serving public causes, inspiring people to public activity and enlightened discussion of national and international problems from the view point of India's best interests. But that was Kelkar's destiny and he never wished to exchange it for any other place of power, pelf or precedence. He was content to serve the country as the active guide, friend and philosopher of the *Kesari* and *Mahratta* in the main. All else he did was incidental and consistently with his position in the Kesari-Mahratta institution.

After his graduation and taking a degree in law in Bombay, Kelkar began his career as a practising pleader at Satara. While studying law, he met Mr. K. P. Khadilkar and Mr. S. K. Kolhatkar both of whom in later life were his friends and colleagues, the former in the work of the Kesari-Mahratta institution and the latter as a literary man in the field of Marathi letters. While practising at Satara, Kelkar cultivated the friendship of Sayendranath Tagore, elder brother of Rajindranath Tagore, who was stationed there as District and Sessions Judge. In these days he translated in Marathi a play in Bengali written by that judge. But this beginning of a purely literary career ended quite soon.

Tilak, who had left the Fergusson College for good and had completely taken over *Kesari* and *Mahratta* as a proprietor from the Deccan Education Society in 1890 was in Satara on some business, when Kelkar renewed the acquaintance of his old professor, Tilak. A few months later, Tilak offered him a seat in his office as Editor of the *Mahratta* and assistant lecturer in the law class Tilak was running to train District pleaders. Kelkar accepted the offer and there began his close association with Tilak which outlived Tilak's death by over 25 years, since Kelkar became a senior trustee and continued to be general editor of his papers.

It is given to few to take so revolutionary and quick a decision as Kelkar took when Tilak's offer came to him. His elder brother and his mother were looking forward to his becoming a prosperous lawyer and a judge in course of time. He himself was not quite averse to such a future for him. The only other consuming passion that dominated his mind then was a literary pursuit, to make a name as a writer. Kelkar's first impulse was to respond to a patriotic and hazardous call and on second thoughts also he came to the conclusion that his heart's desire to write could be fulfilled by joining Tilak. As we know he became both a politician and a great man of letters. For his literary achievements, he was admirably nicknamed *Sahityasamrat*.

Once Kelkar joined Tilak in 1896, he ever remained loyal to him. But, it must be said that though he was an admirer of Tilak's militant patriotic activity and services to the people at grave risk to himself, he was not entirely in favour of his dashing and daring devices. He was by nature a moderate, a cautious man and though he never lacked courage, he was not venturesome. He did not similarly accept blindly Tilak's policies and strategies on all occasions. But, by and large, he favoured and approved his line of thinking and his insistent effort to translate it into practice and so never thought of leaving him even when opportunities came his way of doing so honourably. Tilak also never wanted to lose him.

During the absence of Tilak in Mandalay jail for six years, it was Kelkar who saved his *papers* from Government pouncing upon them by taking up a temperate attitude in his writings. This is not to say that he ceased to criticise Government's policy of repression and obnoxious measures. Only he did it in a less offensive, less angry manner, if one may say so. Besides he chose non-political



subjects for treatment which were also calculated to awaken the self-respect of the people like his series of articles on Sanskrit learning. Even though he agreed with Tilak that political agitation must have priority in patriotic and public work, he did not want to exclude questions of social, economic industrial and educational reform from discussion in *Kesari* and *Mahratta*. In any case in Kelkar's timemore space was found for these than when the papers were under Tilak's direct supervision. Government of Bombay was also advised that Tilak's papers must be allowed to remain untouched, if Government wanted really to have their hand on the pulse of the people.

A good many of his appreciative contemporaries often thought that his place was among the followers of Ranade and Gokhale and had he cast his lot there he might have reached an eminence in public life in India and in the British Empire which the Rt. Honourable Srinivasa Sastri reached. To Tilak he was of course a tower of strength, if he also operated on him as a moderating influence. Tilak heavily leaned on him for his public and semi-public work and he proved equal to all the pressure that was brought to bear upon him. Kelkar's post-Tilak career clearly showed that his model of a public man was Ranade rather than Tilak.

Tilak realised Kelkar's worth best during the Home Rule campaign which was started soon after Tilak's return from Mandalay. From thence till Tilak's death for about six years, it was really Kelkar who bore the brunt of political agitation. Tilak relied most on Kelkar for the Home Rule League's secretarial work as also when both of them were in England and the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were on the anvil. When Mrs. Besant Mr. Arundale and Mr. Wadia were interned at Ootacamund and her *New India* was edited by Mr. Pandharinath Telang, it was Kelkar and Horniman who went to Madras to help Mr. Telang. In England when *India* was taken over by Tilak and Vithalbhai Patel on behalf of the British Congress Committee, it was Kelkar who was placed in charge of *India* as Editor, with Miss Helena Normanton to assist him. It was Kelkar again, who in the midst of his preoccupations prepared *The Case of Indian Home Rule* which Tilak originally had asked Bepin Chandra Pal to prepare. Had Tilak's plan of working the Montagu Reforms been implemented and Kelkar returned from Poona City as was planned, he would have been an elected Minister in the Bombay Council instead of R.P. Paranjpye! It is interesting to speculate how his future would have shaped in that event.

In a sense, Kelkar was eclipsed by Tilak, when the latter was alive. That was natural and of all persons Kelkar was quite content with it and never thought of "carving out a kingdom" for himself. As a loyal lieutenant, he served Tilak to his last day and considered that as a sufficiently patriotic fulfilment of his aspiration. But Tilak died at such a juncture in the country's life that Kelkar was denied the safety which follows an accepted master. Gandhi had emerged in his full glory on the political firmament and because of the programme he preached and the methods he followed, Kelkar felt compelled to range himself against him though he yielded to none in respect for the Mahatma's saintliness and self-sacrifice in the service of high ideals. Kelkar with many others gave the Mahatma a full year to try his programme of non-cooperation against his best judgement, because the Mahatma solemnly promised Swaraj within a year—a slogan by which everybody who was somebody in the country was enchanted, forgetting that the Mahatma had laid down conditions which were beyond fulfilment. The conditions were that every one was to do his best to practise the boycott of schools, courts and councils and remain non-violent in thought, word and deed.

Even when there remained just one day of the stipulated period, Swaraj was not in sight and to the exasperation of all intelligent persons, the Mahatma kept on repeating that Swaraj would dawn the next day, if only people sincerely carried out the programme. Many Congressmen felt that this was nothing short of a hoax and a deception; a delusion and a snare. Somewhere a mob became violent and the Mahatma condemned its violence. He was soon prosecuted and sent to jail. His followers were left to shift for themselves and not a few felt that the triple boycott and civil disobedience must be given up.

Return to the old constitutional agitation in pursuit of Swaraj began to be advocated. Kelkar became the spearhead and leader of this call for "Return to Amritsar". He kept on pounding the intelligentsia in the country through the columns of the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta* to be sensible and practical arguing that it would not be less patriotic to do so. Other journals like the *Hindu* and *Swadeshmitran* in Madras, the *Bombay Chronicle* in Bombay and the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* in Calcutta followed his lead. The Congress appointed what was called the Civil Disobedience Inquiry Committee, which consisted of six persons and they were equally divided, one set of them advocating Kelkar's line.

The members of the Civil Disobedience Inquiry Committee were Messrs. Motilal Nehru, Kasturiranga Iyengar, C. Rajagopalachariar, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. M. A. Ansari and Mr. Vithalbhai Patel. Kelkar was closely examined as a witness from Maharashtra for over five hours and the result was that Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel and Hakim Ajmal Khan were converts to his view that the triple boycott must be lifted; the other three stood by Civil Disobedience. Thus the report of the Committee was divided. But with the release of Chitta Ranjan Das and his agreeing with the Nehru-Patel view, the Swaraj Party was formed, Gandhiji had to declare that 'The Parliamentary mentality has come to stay' and Gandhiji had to recognise the Swaraj Party as its constitutional wing. It was Kelkar whose pioneering efforts were really responsible for this.

With the establishment of the Swaraj Party, Kelkar became a Parliamentarian and in spite of his bad throat, he made a name as a cogent speaker and ready-witted debator. He would have shone in this capacity many years earlier for he intended to contest a seat to the Bombay Legislative Council after the Morley-Minto Reforms had come into existence. But relying on his having been convicted for Contempt of Court in 1908 and remained in jail for 14 days, a ban was placed on his candidature and he could not stand. The contempt of court law was such that the accused had either to apologise or remain in jail indefinitely. He was advised to tender an apology and he did but the stigma remained. The charge against him was that he had severely criticised Justice Dawar for the remarks he had made against Tilak while sentencing him for sedition to a term of six years' imprisonment. It may be pointed out here that Srinivasa Sastri and N. A. Dravid of the Servants of India Society had read this article before it went in print and Sastri had so whole-heartedly approved of it that he said "It would be a sacrilege to change even a comma".

Kelkar had a pronounced judicial temperament and his habit was to examine all the sides and all the aspects of a question. His was not an advocate's mind but a judge's mind and therefore he could not be a good partisan. Sastri had a similar temperament and the remark that he could put his opponent's case better was equally true of Kelkar. His contributions to the debates on any measure before the Legislative Assembly were essentially constructive. Motilal Nehru as leader of the Swaraj Party had originally thought of nominating Kelkar for the Speakership of the Assembly but he

changed his mind with Kelkar's own consent, because he found Vithalbhai Patel as more of a thorn in his side as a Deputy Leader than a loyal colleague and therefore got him out of his way by nominating him for Speakership. It is difficult to say whether Kelkar would have been as strong and as assertive a Speaker of the Assembly as Patel. Temperamentally Kelkar and Patel were a complete contrast, and in those days Motilal Nehru thought that though the Speaker's office needed a person of a judicial and impartial temperament as a rule, it would be better to have a little less impartial man than Kelkar for the Speakership of the Assembly and thus Vithalbhai Patel succeeded Sir Frederick Whyte.

It is interesting to recall that when the all-white Simon Commission was appointed Kelkar was not originally inclined to boycott it, even when Liberals like Sir Chimanlal Setalvad took that position. Ultimately he fell in line with the whole country. Similarly when the salt and forest satyagraha campaigns began, Kelkar also broke the salt laws, quite openly and publicly. Government arrested so many others but not Kelkar. He was invited to attend the first Round Table Conference and his better mind told him that he should go and do his best there but he was prevented from doing so by his followers like Jamnadas Mehta and L.B. Bhopatkar and other colleagues in the Kesari-Mahratta office like J.S. Karandikar and D.V. Gokhale. However, when invited, he attended the third Round Table Conference with Sapru and Jayakar, but did not again attend the meetings of the Joint Parliamentary Committee. Thus he was continually torn between his spontaneous political leanings and his loyalty to what was described as the Tilak trend or Tilak cult in politics for many years after Tilak's death. Till Tilak was alive, his only concern was to remain loyal to him and be his helpmate.

The fact that Kelkar is gratefully remembered in Maharashtra more as a literary prodigy, an altruistically minded gentleman, disposed to help all good causes that made for all kinds of social good and a man who did not enjoy strife rather than a political agitator is sufficient evidence of the fact that the people judged him right and appreciated his worth as such. It is quite true that his writings, particularly in the *Kesari* trained at least two generations to think, to discuss dispassionately and to arrive at independent conclusions on any question that cropped up. In this way, he was a teacher of a host of such brilliant writers of Marathi

prose as Mate, Phadke, Smasrabuddhe, Karandikar, Shikhare and indeed many others. There was no literary form of writing that Kelkar did not try and master, though his fame is the greatest and universally acknowledged as supreme as an essayist. He wrote plays, novels, short stories, poems historical dissertations and political tracts. He was always in demand to conduct meetings and debates in Colleges and cultural institutions. He was a lover of Sanskrit learning and tried once or twice to address meetings of Sanskritists in Sanskrit. He believed in making new experiments and trying his hand in any branch of learning and thus enjoying life. Even when he retired formally from the editorship of the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta* he never really retired. He used to take active interest in the work of these journals and he never ceased to write till the day of his death.

Like Ranade and Gandhi, Kelkar believed in working on all fronts for all-sided development of the country and not on concentration of political agitation alone. Tilak's next choice to politics was learned subjects like astronomic and mathematical research or scholarly pursuits in ancient Sanskrit learning. Kelkar believed in working for social and educational reform and a University of Maharashtra was one of his favourite subjects. Although he himself was not in the forefront, he heartily welcomed the first Kher ministry in full enjoyment of provincial autonomy and when Independence came, he felt that he had not lived in vain till the age of 75.

He was a contented and happy man and he had the consciousness that he had deliberately harmed none. Only two or three days before his death he presided at a friend's golden jubilee reception. His death came rather too suddenly. As usual he was reading and talking to his grand children in the afternoon, but began to feel restless and so did not take his supper. Yet he was sitting at his desk and then went to bed. On his desk was a poem in Marathi in his own hand and his eye-glasses kept on the slip of paper on which it was written. In the morning his family found that he was dead. It was obviously a heart attack, but no one suspected it even a few hours before. He died a peaceful death such as few do. He did not cause any disturbance to anybody. No doctor had to be called in because no serious illness was there. The beginning of the poem is : "I am in sight of Death but it cannot frighten me". It is an out-pouring of his heart, straight, honest and contented.

## BENJAMIN GUY HORNIMAN

As I think of the late Mr. B.G. Horniman, my mind goes back to my High School days in Bombay. The Home Rule movement promoted independently by Lokamanya Tilak and Mrs. Annie Besant, but both working in full cooperation through their separate organisations in Bombay and Madras, was in full swing. The students in schools and colleges thronged to public meetings and avidly drank every word of speakers like Baptista, Jinnah, Jayakar, Jamnadas Dwarkadas from Bombay and S.M. Paranjpe, K.P. Khadilkar and N.C. Kelkar from Poona.

Horniman who was then editor of the *Bombay Chronicle* which had become practically a mouthpiece of the Home Rulers and his assistants on his staff like Syed Hassain and Dewan Chaman Lal frequently addressed home rule meetings. Among us students, it was an entertaining activity to remember what those men spoke and to imitate them. Incidentally that proved to be quite good training for some of us to develop as public speakers in later life.

I remember one such sentence from the lips of Mr. Horniman and I feel as if I heard it yesterday—so indelibly it is imprinted on my mind. “I am not a member of the Home Rule League, but I believe in all efforts aimed at attaining a representative and democratic form of government and since the Home Rule movement has these ends in view, I extend all my support to it.” This was that sentence? Reading *The Bombay Chronicle* not only was excellent political education but equally good training for learning the English language and even eloquence. So fervent, powerful and easy to follow was his style. I became a reader of the *Chronicle* from 1915 and kept the habit until the paper was closed down by its last proprietors.

Horniman was one of those few Englishmen who completely identified themselves with Indians, their life and their aspirations. Mrs. Besant was of course the most widely known and remembered, but others of our own days whose names easily come to mind are C.F. Andrews and Verrier Elvin. Horniman came out to India as

assistant editor on the staff of the *Statesman* of Calcutta. That was somewhere in 1904-5. During the anti-partition agitation days in Bengal, Surendra Nath Banerjea is said to have noted that "Horniman walked with his Bengali friends bare-footed through the streets of Calcutta with a shawl on his broad, white shoulders. It was a sight to see when sometimes Horniman made public appearances in a *dhoti*, *kurta* and *chaddar* all of spotless white *khaddar*, the *dhoti* cylindrically worn round his waist in the Madras style. He was a vegetarian and teetotaler also. Till the end of 1912, Horniman served on the staff of the *Statesman* and studied Indian questions like an Indian patriot and public man. Mr. Horniman however had served a full probation in journalism while in England. Born on July 17, 1873, he was the seventh child of William Horniman, Paymaster-in-chief of the British Navy. He took his early education from his mother who taught him English Latin, French, Mathematics and Music. Although he was being educated for a career in the Army and had even passed his preliminary examination for the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, he entered journalism at the age of 21 as a reporter on the staff of the *Southern Daily Mail*, Portsmouth. In 1900 he became assistant editor of the *Morning Leader* of London and in later years served the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Manchester Guardian*. But he had a strange fascination for India and as soon as an opportunity offered itself, he came to India and joined the *Statesman* staff. For seven or eight years he served that paper.

Pheroze Shah Mehta who as a self-respecting patriot had found that the cause of the Nationalist movement sponsored by the Indian National Congress suffered for want of an English daily newspaper in Bombay which must sympathise with Indian aspirations. To that end, he and his friends had tried to befriend and finance the *Bombay Gazette* before it was incorporated with the *Times of India* and the *Advocate of India* later. But these attempts were not quite successful. So, Pheroze Shah decided to start his own paper and requested Mr S.K. Ratcliff of the *Statesman* to come to Bombay and edit his paper. He was unable to accept the offer, but suggested that Horniman might be thought of for that very responsible job. Pheroze Shah agreed and Horniman came to Bombay. On March 2, 1913 the *Bombay Chronicle* began publication under his editorship.

In November 1915, Pherozeshah died and Horniman was left to himself. After Tilak entered the Congress at the Lucknow Session in 1916 and the Home Rule Movement also spread all over the country, Horniman felt that he must support the progressive trend in politics. This led to conflict with men like Chinanlal Setalvad, D.E. Wacha, N.M. Samarth and others of the Board of Directors of the Bombay Chronicle Company Ltd. As he could not take dictation from them, he had to resign but the Directors found that they could not run the paper though Samarth tried his best. Horniman was in his saddle again with greater strength at his elbows. Soon this Board resigned and the Home Rulers like Umar Sobhani, Shankarlal Banker, Jinnah and Jayakar came in as Directors. The *Bombay Chronicle* became an organ of the Home Rule movement and the Tilak school of politics in Bombay. Horniman and *Chronicle* became synonymous terms. The paper became most popular. Horniman became a power.

Those were days of the first world war. The Montagu Reforms were under discussion. Horniman completely exposed the 'dyarchy' plan of Sir Lionel Curtis, which was ultimately adopted in the Montagu reforms. Mrs. Besant was interned. A fresh sedition case, now the third, was instituted against Tilak. Defence of India Act was at work to suppress people. There was acute discontent because Tilak and Besant were not invited to the War Conference in Delhi. Gandhi protested against it. At last Lord Willingdon invited Tilak and others to the Bombay War Conference but he would not allow them to speak freely at the Conference in support of the war effort. Tilak, Kelkar, Horniman, Jamnadas Dwarkadas walked out of the Conference. Horniman was in the thick of the nationalist movement for freedom. Government of India thought that Horniman must be curbed and they deported him to England, dragging him out of his sick-bed. That was in 1919.

Horniman tried every now and then to return to the scene of his labours and demands were publicly made from India to lift the ban on him to enter India from the platform of the Congress and many a provincial conference, but Government never paid heed to it. At last he decided to violate the Government order. He first came to Ceylon, landed in Columbo and not caring what would happen proceeded to Bombay. Government left him alone. People did not find the same young, healthy Horniman. He had aged considerably and he was not as well-dressed as in 1916-19. He and



Jinnah were the best-dressed men on the platform in those days. Soon he was requested to resume the editorship of the *Bombay Chronicle*. That was in 1926. He used to write for the 'Chronicle' from England and those writings contained chiefly his reflections and recollections. In one of these writings, the present writer clearly remembers, he called the late Mr. S.A. Brelvi 'the greatest leader-writer in Asia.'

Horniman did not find it easy to carry on his work in the *Bombay Chronicle*, because he had become even more radical after his return from England. He was more in sympathy with the youth leagues, the socialists, the militant trade unionists and the starving and rack-rented peasantry, while the *Bombay Chronicle* was required to remain just nationalist until foreign rule was abolished. Horniman felt that a radical programme only helped the nationalist aspiration of attaining political freedom which was the primary aim of the Congress. He had to leave the *Bombay Chronicle*. He addressed public meetings, collected some capital, took away with him some of the members of the staff of the *Bombay Chronicle* and started the *Indian National Herald* in the Advocate of India press with the co-operation of Mr. R.B. Lotvala who had then become the owner of that press and its building. But this effort did not succeed and a few years later Horniman came back to the proprietors of the *Bombay Chronicle* when they started an evening daily called the *Bombay Sentinel* and installed him as the editor of that paper, Mr Brelvi continuing to edit the *Bombay Chronicle*.

The old glorious days of the Home Rule movement when Horniman was not merely considered a brilliant journalist, but also a public leader, never returned although he continued his mission of popular education unabated. It looked as if he was tolerated more than really wanted, because of his past services and people were more kind and compassionate toward him than appreciative. He was lovingly called 'Governor' by his staff and it seemed that he liked to be referred to as such. There were such brilliant men among his disciples in journalism as Brelvi, Pothan Joseph, Chaman Lall, Syed Hassain, Raghavan, Venkatram, Sharma and several others. The *Bombay Chronicle* office was, as it were, a training school for Nationalist journalists and there were many others who recognised in him their master even from long distances just as Ekalavya, the tribesman archer of Mahabhartar fame claimed Dronacharya for his Guru and threatened to excel the best of this disciples viz Arjuna, even though he was in constant contact of the master,

The tribute that Mahatma Gandhi paid to Horniman when he was forcibly removed from the scene of his activities in 1919 sums up precisely what the feelings of all Indians were for him, Gandhi said, "With great sorrow and with equal pleasure I have to inform you that the Government have today removed Mr. Horniman from Bombay. Mr. Horniman is a very brave and generous Englishman. He has given us the *mantra* of Liberty. He has fearlessly exposed wrongs wherever he has seen them and thus he has been an ornament to the race to which he belongs and rendered it a great service. Every Indian knows his services to India."

A fair estimate and summation of Horniman's career as a journalist and political agitator has been made by Sir Rustom Masani, biographer of Dadabhai Naoroji when he sent a message to the Horniman College of Journalism silver jubilee. He said, "On March 2, 1913, the *Bombay Chronicle* made its appearance with Mr. B. G. Horniman already a distinguished figure in the realm of journalism as its editor. Having, since that day, watched his career as the most vigorous and fearless exponent of the ideals of freedom which were then stirring the life of the people and having enjoyed, along with other admirers of the brilliance of his pen, his outspoken and refreshing criticisms of current events and contemporary men and measures, I rejoice to find today that the implicit faith of the illustrious founder of that paper, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, in the gifted editor stands fully justified by the position attained by the two papers which Mr. Horniman has edited, the *Bombay Chronicle* and the *Bombay Sentinel* as the most uncompromising organs of nationalist opinion and by the position he himself has attained as a potent factor in the political education of the people of this country. It is a remarkable feature of our political history that a hundred years ago, even while India was slumbering, unmindful of her wrongs, unconscious of her rights, she had not a few British friends who fought the bureaucracy of the day for the redress of India's wrongs and that while the national life of the people began to pulsate with ideals of freedom and self-government, the earliest Indian exponents of those ideals received the wholehearted support of several British friends. Mr. Horniman has worthily maintained the traditions of those truly British lovers of freedom and democracy and his name will long be remembered in the country with feelings of admiration and gratitude."

A top bureaucrat of the Montagu Reforms days expressed his reaction to the writings of Mr. Horniman in the following words, "I hate Horniman, though I cannot help admiring his articles. They serve as a tonic." The Government officials read and scanned every line he wrote ; they read between the lines and above them and underneath them. But all their scrutiny was futile. It was not possible to catch him. He had studied and mastered the intricacies of the Indian Penal Code, the law of sedition and the law of defamation and he could manage to say and convey all that he intended to without coming into the clutches of Law. He impressed upon all his colleagues to do likewise, because he held that the journalists as the defenders of popular rights had to do their duty and be liable to legal action because the conflict between the people and the rulers and their friends was perennial. It was no bravery to be caught and punished and sent to jail. It was more important to continue to live and serve and not die as in the field of battle.

Horniman pivoted his journalistic acumen on three principles. A radical and national outlook on all matters ; Attitude of conscientious approach to all human affairs and events ; determination to expose courageously and ruthlessly all that was evil, base and false. This made his writings lucid, trenchant, unambiguous. The real skill of a journalist lay in surmounting all the difficulties placed by officialdom in his way. He protested against all coercive and repressive legislation but felt that a trained and skilful journalist could always circumvent that legislation. Had Horniman been alive and shown the following advice that Tilak gave to Messrs Kelkar and Khadilkar from distant Mandalay he would have endorsed every word of it. Tilak said :

"The situation is not so hopeless as you seem to think. The Act applies to all. See how other papers similar to ours conduct themselves and shape your course accordingly, bearing in mind, however, that your paper will be more specially watched. Anyhow, it will be your duty to keep within the limits of law, however, stringent it may be. One can only make the best use of what freedom one has. I do not think you need eschew all views or current topics, but in order to avoid being misunderstood you must confine yourself to facts and facts alone. In the case of measures, explain the scope, give the history and state in a logical form, its most natural consequences, without indulging in rhetoric or exhortations to Government or the public. In short, after a clear and succinct statement of the case, leave the people to judge for themselves."

## BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR

It is an interesting pastime to speculate what Dr. B.R. Ambedkar would have been, had he not been born an off-spring of a Mahar family, all other things remaining the same. Since there are numerous ways of answering this conundrum, there is vast scope for allowing imagination to work. One way of replying to this question is that he would easily have been the President or Prime Minister of India.

In spite of all the handicaps he was subjected to by reason of his so called low birth, he rose to an eminence that itself is amazing. Because of his birth as a Harijan, he deliberately stuck to being recognised only as such and concentrated his attention only on trying to improve the lot of his untouchable fellow-men instead of trying to lead a bigger political party or the whole country.

Only once he tried to do this when he started what was called the Independent Labour Party. It had the possibilities of becoming an all India Party with a clear labour and peasant programme on radical and socialist lines. But the Party remained restricted only to Maharashtra if not only to the limits of the City of Bombay and the country was surely the poorer for it. It would surely have found a footing in every part of India and it would have cut across communal and provincial differences and done a great deal to foster a real national feeling.

The reason for such a development not coming about may be traced to the conflict from which Ambedkar suffered in his mind. He was essentially a scholar, a lover of books, even a bookworm. Learning was his first love, politics second love. In this respect he bears a curious similarity to Tilak. Tilak's original bent of mind was also towards scholarship, teaching and learning. Politics was forced on him. Ambedkar could not bear the condition of the depressed classes and his conscience would not let him do anything that was not calculated to bring about uplift of the depressed classes. So he always kept on oscillating between scholarly pursuits and politics.

He heard about the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. He felt a strong urge for participating in it. His purpose was two-fold. He would reveal to the western world the great wealth of India's spiritual heritage and he would appeal to the American people to help in improving the material standards of life of India's masses. This idea caught on and his friends in South India arranged a passage for him.

When Vivekananda reached America, he had to face a number of barriers. He had not enough money with him which meant starvation. What was worse was that having no official credentials, how could he be accepted by the Parliament of Religions as a speaker? On the day of the inaugural session, he took his seat on the platform as the representative of Hinduism. Facing the audience he felt as if he had acted impetuously and might let down his country. He had not even thought of preparing a script of his speech; he had not even made any notes. He postponed his ordeal until the day's session was about to close listening to all the while torrents of oratory.

Was he going to speak or not? Yes, he was on his feet at last and impulsively he addressed his first words, "Sisters and Brothers of America." They created a tremendous reaction. Such words were not used by anybody before. Hundreds of men and women rose spontaneously to their feet and cheered hard for several minutes. In those few minutes, Vivekananda gathered his wits. With perfect self-assurance he spoke about 500 words. He thanked the assembly in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world, in the name of the Mother of Religions. "We believe not only in universal toleration but we accept all religions are true."

He explained that he belonged to a people who had given shelter to the persecuted and the refugees of many nations--Israelites who came to India when the Romans destroyed their holy temple; Zoroastrians from Persia, and others, Bigotry and fanaticism had long filled the earth with violence and often drenched it with human blood. But for this human society would have been far advanced. He hoped, however, that the deathknell of all fanaticism had sounded and all persecutions with the sword or with the pen were about to cease."

Four days afterwards he addressed the Parliament once more, but again briefly. His theme was: Why we disagree. "Like the proverbial frog, men of every religion feel convinced that their little

well is the whole world" was his reply to the question he himself had posed. Once again he read a fairly exhaustive paper on Hinduism. This was followed the next day by an appeal. His theme was : Religion is not the crying need of India. The desperate need is for bread. He declared, "It is an insult to a starving people to offer them religion."

He spoke 12 times in all in this 17-day session of the Parliament of Religions. In his address on the last day, he summed up all the points he was stressing. He did not want a Christian to become Hindu or Buddhist nor did he want a Hindu or a Buddhist to become Christian. He laid down, "Each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth."

Vivekananda's first visit to America lasted for about three years and a half. He went on a lecture tour all over the country and saw every important part of America in about a year. A group of men and women gathered about him to help him in every way and spread his message everywhere. Vedanta classes and centres were started in various places. He was unable to resist the demand for public lectures and they were often more than twelve in a week. One description of these lectures is : Every thought was passion, every lecture was a torrential improvisation. In 1895 a devotee placed at his disposal a large cottage on Thousand Island Park, the largest island in the St. Lawrence river. An Ashram was founded here in the beautiful setting of water and woodland.

For about three months during his American stay, Vivekananda went on a visit to England. His American disciples carried on his work of Vedantic studies. On his return he devoted his attention to the work of consolidation of his acquisition. Disciples were multiplying fast, but his influence spread far beyond the circle of devotees. A typical example is that of the American poetess Ella Wheeler Wilcox whose reaction is recorded in the following words, "We went out of curiosity and before we had ten minutes in the audience we felt ourselves lifted up into an atmosphere so rarefied, so vital, so wonderful that we sat spell-bound and almost breathless, to the end of the lecture. When it was over, we went out with new courage, new hope, new strength, new faith."

Vivekananda, however had not merely gone to teach. He was conscious that India had much to learn from the West. He always

saw the possibility of harmonising the possibility of Western science with Indian Philosophy and our urgent need for western science and social organisation. Once he said, "We talk foolishly against material civilisation. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishness for granted, in all India there are say a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualisation of those, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation?"

He has clearly stated elsewhere that what we want is western science coupled with Vedanta and by science he means not only its application but its essential spirit of research.

The following passage from one of his speeches is an excellent example of self-criticism and cold analysis. He said, "The Hindu mind is ever deductive and never synthetic or inductive. In all our philosophies, we always find hair-splitting arguments taking for granted some general proposition, but the proposition itself may be as childish as possible. Nobody ever asked or searched for the truth of these general propositions. Therefore, independent thought, we have none to speak of, and hence the dearth of those sciences which are the results of observation and generalisation. And why is this? From two causes: the tremendous heat of the climate forcing us to love rest and contemplation better than activity, and the Brahmans and the priests never undertaking journeys or voyages to distant lands."

Vivekananda's desire that we must mix with all the faces of the earth is being realised now and had he been alive, this would have immensely pleased him. "We cannot do without the world outside India, it was our foolishness that we thought we could and have paid the penalty by about a thousand years of slavery. That we did not go out to compare things with other nations, did not mark the workings that have been all around us, has been the one great cause of this degradation of the Indian mind." He would have seen that all this is changing and changing fast.

The continuing universal significance of the teaching of Swami Vivekananda that the way of universal peace and goodwill lies through the realisation of the unity of existence and the solidarity of mankind is recognised everywhere. Dr. Grayson Kirk, President of Columbia University said, "Significant though Vivekananda's thoughts on religious tolerance are to domestic situations, even more important is the extension of this principle to dealings among nations. The world must learn, small though it is, it is large enough to

accommodate people who follow many different theories of economic and political organisation, just as it has learned however painfully, that it is large enough to contain peacefully the many religious creeds that once were such a source of discord and bloodshed."

Dr. Kirk, noting that "the beneficent influence of a great life can continue through the passing years to exert an even wider effect upon mankind," turned to the meaning and significance of Vivekananda's life which "has influenced so many millions of men and women abroad as well as in his own country." He spoke of "the historical importance of Vivekananda in the context of Indian-American relations" and said:

"My own conclusion is that he played an interesting, as well as an important role as an interpreter of the two cultures to each other. In this country, his great personal charm, his intellectual brilliance and his spiritual profundity made such an impression that he was listened to with respect when he sought to dispel some of the strange notions hitherto held by Americans about his people and their customs."

Similarly in India, Dr. Kirk added, Vivekananda helped to correct distorted stereotypes of America. "For this service, even if there were no other," he said, "both countries are indebted to this remarkable and indefatigable man whose intelligence and sympathy enabled him to carry conviction when he sought to demolish the distortions and untruths held by both peoples about each other." Dr. Kirk noted that in India, people listened to Vivekananda "not only as a spiritual leader, but as a man who gave them a dream of what the India of the future might be."

"Men have dreamed for centuries of the vision of a world of nations living peacefully together, exchanging their products and their ideas, their books and their views in a climate of friendliness. In such a world hostility will give way to tolerance, and tolerance will give way to brotherhood. The road is long and difficult, but we should be grateful that in all lands there have been men like Vivekananda who have helped to light us on our way."





